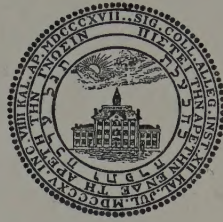


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The Reports of the First and Second Sub-
committees of the Committee appointed
by the National Constituent Assembly to
inquire into the responsibility for the war,
together with the stenographic minutes of
the Second Subcommittee and Supple-
ments thereto

VOLUME II

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WILSON, WOODROW.....	President of the United States.
ZENKER.....	Captain in the German Navy.
ZIMMERMANN, MR.	German Secretary of State of the Foreign Office.

ELEVENTH SESSION

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1919

The session was opened at 10:25 o'clock, by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: I open the session, and ask his Excellency Helfferich to continue with his testimony.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Ladies and gentlemen, in order to recall to your minds the most important points covered by my statements of day before yesterday, I may venture to make the following brief recapitulation.

First of importance among those questions which were put to me was the request for an explanation of how it was that, in that telegram of January 9, 1917, which was directed to the Imperial Chancellor and which is to be found in the records before the committee, it came about that I set out various reasons against the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war on the 1st of February, 1917, whereas, on January 31st, three weeks later, in this hall, in a speech addressed to the budget committee of the Reichstag, I advocated the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war on the 1st of February. In this connection, I called attention to the fact that the U-boat war was not an abstract matter of opinion, but a political measure in war-time, which had to be handled and directed in accordance with changing conditions. And I further called attention to the new developments which came up, and which happened between the time that I wrote my telegram at 4 o'clock on the morning of the 9th of January, and my appearance here before the Reichstag on the 31st of January of the same year.

Let me recapitulate these facts: First, the resolution which was taken at Headquarters on the evening of the 9th of January, and which, as a matter of fact, was irrevocably taken, to launch the U-boat war on the first of February. Secondly, the joint reply of the Entente Powers to President Wilson of the 10th of January, that is, on the day when the gates of peace were closed with a crash and which, according to my estimate of the situation, destroyed all prospect of peace at that stage of the war. Thirdly, President Wilson's message to the Senate, which confirmed my worst fears concerning the actual neutrality of the President and which showed me that a peace mediation by President Wilson such as would bring about a peace which was acceptable or, in fact, endurable for us, could no longer be expected. For, in the course of this message, the President—and I take occasion to repeat this—first of all, met our reply to his note, in which we proposed that a peace conference be immediately determined upon to meet at some neutral

place, a peace conference at which it was our desire to submit proposals which should do no more than guarantee the honor, existence and freedom of development of our people, with the reproof that it "merely" contained the proposal that the parties should meet in conference. He voiced this reproof, although, in the meantime, Count Bernstorff had informed him that our peace proposals were moderate, and that, above all, we did not desire to annex Belgium, and although Colonel House, President Wilson's confidential man, had stated to Count Bernstorff on President Wilson's behalf, that the President looked upon these communications of ours as valuable in the extreme. On the contrary, he not only failed to reject the impossible reply of the Entente which, two years later, alas! found its full development in the Versailles peace, and, in so doing, characterized it for what it meant, to wit, the end of all efforts to obtain peace, but—let Dr. Sinzheimer demur to this as he may—he treated this answer as being one which was debatable.

In the second case, and in connection with a very special instance which was of the most peculiar importance to us, he intermeddled in the matter of actual war aims in a manner wholly unendurable to us, in a manner which gave good cause for us to entertain the greatest apprehension for the future, namely, in the question of Poland, on which occasion he casually announced that, naturally, all statesmen would agree upon the point that a free and independent Poland must exist. And soon thereafter came his supplementary statement concerning the free outlet to the sea, either by means of cession of territory or, where that was not possible, by the neutralization of great rights of way under a general international guarantee. These were the three events which came up between the date of my telegram of the 9th of January and the occasion of my speech before the main committee on the 31st of January.

I shall now proceed. When, on the 22d of January, Mr. Gerard handed over to the Foreign Office a copy of the message which President Wilson was at the same time reading to the American Congress, the decision with regard to the question of the U-boat war had, as you know, already been made. By the end of November, or at the beginning of December, 1916, the Admiralty Staff, basing its representations upon a special incident, demanded that the intensive U-boat war against armed merchant ships be reopened, and this on the basis of a special case which seemed to me to justify the demand. In a telegram of December 1, 1916, Count Bernstorff was put in possession of the facts. Concerning this point, the records show that there were very marked differences of opinion between the political branch, on the one hand, and the Admiralty Staff and the Supreme High Command of the Army, on the other. On this occasion, I took the ground that, although I conceded the complete justice of the case made out by the special incident which gave rise to the proposal that the intensive U-boat warfare should be reopened, and announcement that the intensive U-boat war would be again

carried on against merchant ships, would, in view of the attitude which had been taken by the American Government in its memorandum of March 25, 1916, compromise the peace move and evoke the danger of a break with the United States to the same extent that the announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war would have done. Secretary of State Zimmermann lately testified here—and his statement is in full accord with the facts—that he took a different view of the situation in this regard; that he believed that, at this point, some kind of understanding with the American Government might be reached on the matter of the intensive U-boat war. In any event, instructions to Washington were postponed until well into the month of January, 1917, and this incident had no other particular significance in the further course of events connected with the decision reached with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war.

The discussion about the reopening of the unrestricted U-boat war had, from the time that the question had been raised at the commencement of October by the main committee of the Reichstag, been for the time being completely side-tracked by our peace move. Immediately after the failure of our peace move became apparent, it was brought up again, and, in fact, by means of the telegram of General Ludendorff dated the 20th of December, which is now in the hands of the committee. This telegram reads as follows:

Since Lloyd George (who had addressed the House of Commons on the 18th) has rejected our peace proposal in his speech in the lower house (and this was done in a very curt manner) I am of the opinion that, as the result of the impressions I have received on the western front, the U-boat war should now be launched with the greatest vigor.

This proposition was met by the Imperial Chancellor with the objection that, first of all, we would have to await receipt of the formal reply of the Entente, and that then we should have to settle the question of a U-boat war against armed merchant ships. In a personal interview at Pless, at which Secretary of State Zimmermann and I were present, the Chancellor declared that his future attitude with regard to the question of the unrestricted U-boat war would have to depend upon the final stand taken by the Entente in answer to our peace proposal and to President Wilson's peace move, and upon the further development of the whole question. That, if it became impossible to bring about an agreement on the subject-matter in question between him, the Supreme High Command of the Army, and the Admiralty Staff, the Emperor would have to be called upon for a decision. And that was the way we left the matter at Pless at that time, on the 29th of December, 1916. On the following day, December 30, the Entente Powers handed over their reply to our peace proposal, the contents of which are well known. On the other hand, the answer of the Entente to Wilson's peace note had not, as yet, been received when Field Marshal v. Hinden-

burg's telegram of the 8th of January, which also is in the possession of the committee, reached Berlin, whose contents were to the effect that he considered that the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war on the 1st of February was, for military reasons, absolutely essential. After this telegram was received, the Chancellor went to the General Headquarters on the evening of the 9th of January, and it was there that, on the evening of the 9th—but Mr v. Bethmann-Hollweg has related the circumstance here in detail—that the resolution was reached to launch the unrestricted U-boat war on February 1st.

I may testify as follows with regard to my personal attitude toward this resolution.

First of all, concerning my judgment of the effect that the U-boat war would have upon England:

In one important respect, there had been a distinct change for the better in favor of the unrestricted U-boat war, in comparison with the spring of 1916. England's crops had turned out to be materially inferior to those of the preceding year. But, most important of all, the crop of the year 1916 in those producing countries which were most essential to the food supply of England, was absolutely bad, first in the United States, and then in Canada. The United States and Canada, which had taken care during the preceding harvest year of more than 88 per cent of the British grain imports—these two countries found their wheat crop reduced from $37\frac{1}{2}$ million tons to $21\frac{1}{2}$ million. Delegate Gothein, who is a member of this committee, addressed the main committee at length in those days with regard to this situation, and he will confirm the correctness of my figures. The supply of breadstuffs in England itself, which during the first eight months of the year 1916 had been greater than in the preceding years, from September on was below figures of the preceding year. Basing my stand on the facts as they existed, it was not only on the 1st of January, but in the month of October, 1916, that I announced in so many words at the meeting of the main committee—and I will quote from the stenographic report—that “the unrestricted U-boat war has better prospects today of cutting England off from the imports which she needs in the way of foodstuffs than it would have had six months ago.” In spite of all this, it seemed to me in October, 1916, even taking into consideration the fact that prospects were improved from our point of view, that the danger of the United States entering into the war preponderated, and this for the reasons which I ventured to disclose in the general portion of my testimony.

The weeks and months which followed October brought confirmation of crops unprecedentedly poor in North America, as well as reports of a similarly unfavorable situation affecting the crops in Argentina, where the wheat harvest was estimated at only 2.1 million tons as against 4.7 million tons in the previous year. Wherever you looked, there were unmistakable signs of

a very definite shortage in grain supplies. It was then that the term "world famine" came up. Prices rose rapidly, but in spite of the fact that England was willing to pay the highest prices, she constantly watched her imports lag further and further behind her needs. December of 1916 brought her wheat imports amounting only to 1,410,000 quarters, as against 1,955,000 quarters in the preceding year, and this with every obvious indication that conditions would get still worse—indications which developed into facts, so far as could be judged from the English statistics, which were no longer available to us after our resolution to launch the unrestricted U-boat war became known. Then, too, the great supplies of wheat which America had been able to retain as a reserve from the record crop of the preceding year, gave evidence of a most serious shortage, and sank more and more below the standard of the preceding year.

And to this situation was added the further factor consisting of the increase of the efficiency of our U-boats and the added results in the way of their performance. I have already called attention to the fact that the sinkings which, in the spring of 1916, had reached their highest monthly limit during the intensive U-boat war, to the amount of some 225,000 tons, sent more than 400,000 tons to the bottom during the last months of 1916. I do not know whether Professor Hoetzsch has in the meantime verified the figures; I have done so, and I assume that the lower figures which Professor Hoetzsch has given apply only to the enemy ships which were sunk, and not to the neutral ships. The figures which were published as official for November already exceeded 400,000 tons; for December, 416,000 tons; and for January, a round 440,000 tons. These results from the U-boat war on commerce were such as to allow us to expect that the 600,000 tons which had been estimated before as a prospective amount, but of which we were not altogether certain after all, and which was the amount the Admiralty Staff had prophesied would result from the unrestricted U-boat war, would not only most certainly be reached, but in all probability would be definitely surpassed. That was a development which could be foreseen as early as October. Above all, as has been recently pointed out, the U-boat war on commerce which, at the Emperor's command, was vigorously pushed in British waters during October, had quite a different effect upon the shipping in the British ports from that of the earlier U-boat war. The cargo space of the ships which had entered the British ports with their cargoes had amounted to more than 2,700,000 net tons a month during the months of June, July, and August, 1916; that is, after the intensive U-boat war had been abandoned. In December, 1916, they only amounted to 2,213,000 net tons, as against—and this is important—a monthly peace average of 4,090,000 tons in the year 1913. So that the number of ships entering British ports under cargo had, when compared with times of peace, been cut down by December, 1916, by not less than 45 per cent, according

to the English statistics themselves. Of course we could expect a material increase in shortage to result from the launching of an unrestricted U-boat war.

This further tightening of the screws, added to the 45 per cent throttling process which was already in existence, was at least sufficient, apparently, to increase the possibility of striking at the very roots of England's economic strength and of her capacity to conduct the war. In view of the composition of England's trade imports, such a cutting down in the shipping traffic would strike a very serious blow at those classes of merchandise which were absolutely essential to the nourishment of the people and for the conduct of the war, and which could be replaced by England from domestic sources either not at all or only at great cost of time or in very small amounts; for, of the imports of the last peace year, which reached a height of 57 million tons, in round numbers some 20 million tons were composed of foodstuffs and luxuries, 16 million tons of wood, which was of particular importance for the British coal- and iron-mining industries, and altogether only some 13.5 million tons of other merchandise, part of which consisted of such materials necessary for war purposes as metals—above all else, copper—cotton, wool and petroleum.

In spite of the fact that the crop conditions were unfavorable, that the choking-off process of the British sea traffic had already been put into operation, in spite of the increased efficiency of our U-boats, and of the fact that these elements had notably improved the prospects held out by a U-boat war, when, in December, 1916, the U-boat question again came up, I very definitely advised against launching the unrestricted U-boat war until the existing peace question could have become clearly settled—*until the existing peace question could have become clearly settled*; that was the main consideration. And although it now seemed possible to me that England might be forced to incline toward the idea of peace under the pressure of the U-boat war before America could concentrate against us the full measure of her economic strength and her population—seemed possible!—nevertheless, at the same time, I considered the American peril so important as to permit nothing to be untried which could possibly result in bringing about even the remotest possibility of perhaps succeeding, after all, in keeping America out of the war. I feared that, by breaking loose with the unrestricted U-boat war before our own peace move and Wilson's peace move should, by the rejection of our enemies, have come to ruin, not only in our own sight but in the sight of all the world, the remaining chances of conducting a U-boat war without involving the United States in war—chances which, perhaps, even yet might exist—perhaps even yet!—might be destroyed. Moreover, in those dark days, I could not entirely submerge the thought that such a premature breaking-loose might possibly give rise to the fundamentally false impression—an impression which might be

objectionable in its effect upon the neutral world and perhaps even upon our own people—that our peace move had not been seriously intended, but was simply a piece of preliminary tactics to usher in the desired launching of the unrestricted U-boat war. I felt that this danger was one which existed, even if the impression was a false one. For, as a matter of fact, it is exactly false impressions with which we have to deal in politics. And, finally, it did not seem to me to be advisable to subject a possibility of bringing about peace, tenuous though it might be, to any risk by reaching a conclusion at a time when, according to my view, the technical situation was not such as to absolutely call for that conclusion to be reached. You can well imagine how, in the case of anybody who shared a joint responsibility—anyone who, in any case, felt that he was jointly responsible, all these considerations would clamor for recognition at such times as these when the fate of one's own country, of the land of one's birth, was at stake, and where the question of what its fate was going to be was clear-cut and called for decision.

I have taken pains to explain to you the various reasons why I did not oppose the U-boat war *per se*, but did take my position in favor of a short postponement of the decision. That the U-boat war was bound to come after the failure of the efforts made in behalf of peace, was a matter, ladies and gentlemen, concerning which I had not the slightest doubt.

The Chairman has recently read us the telegram dealing with this question, which, on the forenoon of January 9, I sent to v. Bethmann at the General Headquarters. In connection with this telegram, I may state that, before the Chancellor left on the evening of the 8th of January, I went into the situation at length and in detail with him and Secretary of State Zimmermann. If I recollect correctly, I had, on the preceding day, received together with a communication of the Admiralty Staff, which is dated January 6, a memorial of the Admiralty Staff of the 22d of December. In those days, I was very busy, too, with other matters. At that time, after Mr. v. Bethmann had boarded the train, I spent the night studying the memorial of the Admiralty Staff which, up to that time, I had only been able to glance through cursorily, I went into it most carefully, and, as I have already stated, at four o'clock in the morning I drew up this telegram after my night of work, which is to be found here in the records and, in accordance with the trend matters have taken, is to be used against me.

In this telegram, I took up the main points of the arguments raised in the memorial of the Admiralty Staff of the 22d of December. I called particular attention to the fact that there was no occasion for precipitate action, and called further attention to the fact that, for natural causes, January and February were unfavorable months for the importation of British wheat-stuffs. America's wheat supply had, in the main been used up; the Argentine crop was as yet not ready. January and February constitute a

natural hiatus in the matter of grain imports. So that time, so far as I could judge from my standpoint, was not working against us, particularly during these months but, on the contrary, was working for us, and of itself resulted in having the wheat supply of England, which was already low at that time, recede to a still more notable ebb. For these reasons, I decided upon a brief postponement until not only we, but the whole world, should be able to have a clearer conception of the peace question. You know that the conclusion reached at the General Headquarters on the 9th of January, 1917, was to the effect that we should wait no longer, and could wait no longer, that the unrestricted U-boat war should commence on the 1st of February and that all preparations therefor must be made.

The reasons for this decision, reasons which were considered as outweighing every objection which could be opposed to this resolve, have been recently explained to you in detail by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg. For my part, I can only affirm that upon his return from Pless, and in fact on the evening of January 12, he described to me those events which had taken place in Pless exactly as he has recently set them out to the investigating committee, and likewise the motives which had animated him, the Chancellor, to say to the Emperor on the evening of the 9th, on the occasion of the conference which was to decide the question, that he could not counsel him to decide against the opinion of the Supreme High Command of the Army and of the Admiralty Staff. I was not present at the conferences in Pless. When, on the morning of the 10th of January, the Chief of the Imperial Chancery, who also had not been in Pless, told me briefly of the resolution which had been reached, altogether without details—he was absolutely not in the position to do that—I can only say to you, ladies and gentlemen, that I was most deeply moved. In my opinion, I considered that the decision which was reached at that moment when the peace question had not been settled, and had not been sufficiently and clearly defined and terminated in such plain fashion as to enable all the world to understand, was a mistake—a mistake which threatened to turn to our disadvantage that quite definite advantage which our peace proposal was expected and bound to bring about, even in case it was rejected.

You will readily see how it came to be my first thought to free myself once and for all from all responsibility for this decision by resigning from my position. And I informed the Chief of the Imperial Chancery of how I felt upon this point, and requested him to take the matter up with the Imperial Chancellor.

I desisted from this purpose, however, after Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg explained to me on the evening of the 12th of January the situation which had confronted him at Pless and the course which matters had taken at Pless, and had told me of the reply note of the Entente to the Wilson peace note which had been delivered to the American Ambassador in Paris. The

text of this answer was received here on the 12th of January. Mr. v. Bethmann held it out to me as I entered his room. That was the peace note concerning which I stated that it contained the essence of the Versailles treaty. Then I, too, realized that we would get no peace unless we continued to fight for it; then I realized that not only the German people, but the whole world, including Mr. Wilson, now saw clearly that this answer prevented any peace.

There was but one chance, a chance in which I had no faith and which did not materialize. The one chance still remaining which could bring us peace consisted in having President Wilson immediately exert the strongest kind of pressure upon the Entente. That did not happen. Rather did the President keep silent, and then came the message to the Senate of the 22d of January, which was no rebuke, but in which any man who read it could see that it was *à laisser aller*, a policy of letting things take their own course, if it was not actually, to a certain extent, an acquiescence in the conditions imposed by the Entente. I had the same kind of impression as that recently mentioned by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, not as his own, but as that of Mr. Scheidemann. Mr. v. Bethmann has mentioned Mr. Scheidemann's speech. I have not the text here; but the gist of it undoubtedly was that, in our own sight and in the sight of all the world, the unrestricted U-boat war was brought about by the Entente's reply of the 10th of January and was morally justified thereby. There was always the remote possibility that this circumstance might even, perhaps, not be wholly without effect upon the American attitude towards the U-boat war.

Those were the conditions, gentlemen, under which I had to ask myself whether, by persisting in resigning, I should take a hand in discrediting the U-boat war—a U-boat war which was resolved upon, even before the matter had been talked over with our allies, even before our allies had been won over to the move, and even before the U-boat war had begun—whether I could answer to myself, in the sight of our own people, of our allies, and of our enemies, for discrediting this U-boat war by an overt act which, after all, would have been absolutely useless. I would have looked upon myself as a criminal if I had done so. By such a course of action, I should have taken onto my own shoulders the same unbearable weight of blame which I leave to be borne, free from any feeling of envy, to those men who, in July, 1917, here in this hall, stabbed the U-boat war in the back. (Great excitement; commotion on the part of members of the committee.) We were at war; we were fighting for our lives. Was I to set the example of that lack of discipline which finally became our ruin?

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I must request you to take back that remark.

The CHAIRMAN: I must refuse to accept this statement, your Excellency, to the effect that, here in this hall, opposition was made to the U-boat war which calls for such characterization as your Excellency has given it.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I must yield to this objection, but I naturally can not change my conviction in the matter. The resolution stood, and as matters were, could not be overturned. I myself, great as was the estimate which I, too, then put upon the danger of the war with the United States which we could scarcely hope to avoid—I myself could discern no possibility whereby the U-boat war might be avoided, in view of the failure of the efforts in behalf of peace and in view of the statements made by our military leaders concerning the military situation. In view of the fact that the Entente had declared not only to us, but even to President Wilson, that they stood firm in their desire to destroy us—in view of the fact that, as the result of all former experience, we could no longer calculate upon any pressure being brought to bear by Wilson upon the Entente, we were left with nothing but the choice of a cringing submission or of a final effort, and in this connection, ladies and gentlemen, I agreed with Frederick William III who, in the call issued to his people on the 17th of March, 1813, said:

There is no other way out except an honorable peace or a glorious defeat. And you will be able to face even this with quiet minds, for the Prussian and the German can not live dishonored.

That was the estimate which I put upon the German people in 1917, and that is how I estimate them in spite of everything which has happened—that is how I feel toward the German people even today.

I should like to inject a remark at this point. I am by no manner of means desirous of claiming, either here or before any other tribunal, that I did not take part in the decision with regard to the U-boat war on the 9th of January, nor shall I claim in my behalf that I opposed the decision of the 9th of January by the telegram which has been referred to. I took part in the decision which was reached on the 12th of January. In so doing, I assumed the moral responsibility of one who was responsible for this decision. In the following weeks and months, I took part in helping to sustain that decision before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Bundesrat, the main committee of the Reichstag, and before the public. In so doing, I assumed my part of the political responsibility. I recognize this responsibility as my own, and I stand for it. I want to make that plain here.

If anything happened after the 12th of January to strengthen me in the attitude that I took with regard to the U-boat war, it was the further reports which came to us from the United States and, above all, the message to the Senate of the 22d. Above all was it this message to the Senate which strengthened me in my conviction, which was bound to strengthen me in the conviction that we could not depend upon President Wilson for help in the matter of obtaining a peace which would be acceptable to us; yes, it actually brought me to the conviction which later became so terribly justified—later, when, in October, 1918, the matter of the peace was laid in the hands of President Wilson—that this peace in Wilson's hands must

result in ruin, so far as we were concerned. I was, therefore, personally skeptical with regard to the renewed offer of President Wilson, transmitted in the dispatch sent by Count Bernstorff on the 28th of January, and all the more so because it seemed absolutely probable to me that President Wilson and the American Government were at that time already informed with regard to our resolve to launch the U-boat war on the 1st of February. Read, if you please, Mr. Gerard's book. In this book, it is stated expressly that, after the much-spoken-of banquet of the 6th of January, Gerard received definite news that the determination to launch the U-boat war had been made and that he had transmitted this news to the United States. This opens perspectives and possibilities of which there was no conception here up to that time, possibilities that this proposal which was made on the 28th of January, 1917, was not made in good faith, the possibility that a trap was being built for us here—possibilities which certainly must not be entirely ignored by this committee. It is certainly true that I did not oppose the attempts to grasp this last straw. I can only state that I have rarely seen Mr. v. Bethmann in such a state of contained excitement as he was on the evening of the 28th of January, when this bare prospect of making peace after all was presented. And it is easy to see how this came about. He who, first of all, carried the responsibility of what was now happening was bound, if he was really striving so honestly for peace in spite of all the opposing elements which, when all is said and done, were bound to close in upon him—he could do nothing else except again put the matter to the proof, again give the opportunity for a last test, again open one last door, in order to see whether or not, in spite of all contrary impressions, the possibility of bringing peace out of war existed even then.

That is the way the telegram which was sent off on the 29th was to be explained; that telegram led to no results. We were told here day before yesterday, when the hearing set in, that the then Imperial Chancellor, Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, really should have proceeded and really should have acted. We heard Professor Bonn's question to Count Bernstorff as to whether or not, if Mr. v. Bethmann had only varied his telegrams by a shade or two, Mr. Wilson might not have answered otherwise.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is very hard to try to dissect the brain of this very complicated President Wilson.

What did our answer say?

First, it contained our peace conditions; our peace conditions which are recognized by everyone to have been very moderate, to have been absolutely nothing in comparison with the Entente proposal, in the formulation of which, moreover, we took no advantage, as we were told to do by Mr. Lansing, of the advice that: "Perhaps the Entente is bluffing; do you people set a good pace yourselves!"

I received the impression that this counsel was considered quite clever

by one or more gentlemen even on this side. But just imagine what would have occurred if we had said in this situation: "We want to annex Belgium and the north of France." Then we would have played England's game and, perhaps, President Wilson's game. We did not do that; we did not raise our terms. I will not say that we spoke the last word, but it was a word which could have been made the subject of discussion. The proposal of the Entente simply could not be debated.

Further, in our answer we stated that we were ready to stop the U-boat war as soon as there was a certainty that success would attend Mr. Wilson's new endeavor to bring about peace. That was about the substance of our telegram of January 29, 1917.

But, says Professor Bonn, if we had said: "At the moment it is impossible for us to recall the U-boats, and it may consequently happen that some American ships will be sunk; so do not be angry with us, we will recall the U-boats as soon as we can, and then please be so good as to make peace"; in which case Wilson, as Professor Bonn thinks and Count Bernstorff asserts, would have continued with his peace mediation. It is obvious that Professor Bonn assumes that it would have happened so, and obvious that Count Bernstorff assumes that it would have happened so. Now, let me ask you a question upon the point. If President Wilson had really intended to bring about peace, could he not have replied, in answer to this suggestion of ours, "I understand that you can not recall all the U-boats at once, and that in the immediate future there may be still more sinkings by U-boats, and I will not hold this against you for that reason; but at least state definitely that you will stop the U-boat war right now and not only when you are assured of the result, but when I promise you at this moment that I will exert the necessary pressure upon the other side to bring about an acceptable peace." That would have constituted no great step, and I believe that everyone who knew of the telegram as it came to be made known to President Wilson by Colonel House, who really at bottom earnestly desired peace, might well have taken this little additional step.

But what did President Wilson do?

This is a question which we must ask Count v. Bernstorff. He gave no answer whatsoever, he simply broke off all relations, and, during all the subsequent period of time in which the world discussed our presumably exorbitant war aims, President Wilson kept so absolutely to himself the conditions which were submitted to him by us and which were so moderate, that no human being and no soul ever knew anything about it. We remained known as the "prolongers of the war"; we remained known as the "world-conquerors."

I should like now to state expressly that the telegram of Count Bernstorff which arrived on the 27th of January, as well as our answer, was communicated in full to the members of the main committee of the Reichstag

in the secret session of the 31st of January. And I should further desire to assert that the great majority declared themselves in full agreement with the way that the matter had been handled by the political branch, with this limitation, that the spokesmen of most of the parties expressed the wish that the Imperial Chancellor, should we actually come to the point of peace negotiations on the basis of our telegram, as everyone hoped that we would, should not necessarily adhere absolutely to the modest conditions which had been outlined by Count v. Bernstorff. I assert this as a fact, for, in my opinion, this is a matter of fundamental importance in connection with the handling of this entire matter by this committee.

But, ladies and gentlemen, I can not let this fact pass over without an observation addressed to Minister of State Dr. David, who undoubtedly is present. Minister of State Dr. David, according to the *Vorwärts* which is probably reporting the facts correctly in this case, stated at a meeting of the Social Democrats that, according to the latest proofs—and he refers to this investigating committee—the German people were misled in the U-boat question and in connection with the negotiations with Wilson; and he added that “while, so far as Wilson was concerned, we were making a barefaced attempt to deceive him, the difficulties of the U-boat war were being concealed from the German people.” I believe that the statements which have been given here up to the present time afford absolutely no ground for Dr. David's statement. The statement that the Reichstag was misled with regard to the U-boat war and with regard to the negotiations with Wilson, probably needs no further comment, in view of the statements recently made here by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg and which have been reiterated by me. Could the Reichstag have been more clearly informed about the American danger than they were informed by me at the time preceding that when the Reichstag itself handed over the responsibility of the decision?

And now the barefaced deceiving of Wilson out of the mouth of a German minister! I have stated these matters here very carefully, certainly leaving no ground untouched. Where can you find that there occurred on our part even an approach, even the faintest attempt, even the faintest semblance, to perpetrate a deceit? Let Minister of State Dr. David examine the testimony of American Minister Gerard. Mr. Gerard writes in his book, with which Dr. David is undoubtedly acquainted, in the act of describing the chief of the then political department which is supposed to have made the barefaced attempt to deceive, the following:

It would have been easier for Germany to make peace with von Bethmann-Hollweg at the helm. The whole world knows him and honours him for his honesty.

Thus the American Ambassador! and thus a German Minister of State! (Commotion and shouts from the audience.)

The CHAIRMAN: I shall ask you to refrain from harsh forms of criticism, of the kind to which you have just given utterance.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Mr. Chairman, I have uttered no injurious words. I have compared the remarks made by Minister of State Dr. David with the statements made by Ambassador Gerard and have stated: Thus speaks an American Ambassador, and thus a German Minister of State. I believe that this is material to the question. (Repeated calls from the audience.)

The CHAIRMAN: I beg that I be not interrupted. That this is justifiable, as a matter of fact, I in no way deny. Consequently, I have also held that it was appropriate that, where one of the authorities of the former government was accused of having been detected in a barefaced attempt to deceive, issue be taken therewith. But, your Excellency, it is the tone which makes the music, and it was for this reason that I made the remark that harsh forms of criticism should be avoided in the statements which are made here for the purpose of materially refuting the public charge against the old government.

Delegate DR. COHN: (On a point of order of business): I should not like to have the impression go abroad that the committee entertains the view that the remarks made by Secretary of State Dr. Helfferich in the course of his polemic have anything whatsoever to do with the purpose of the proceedings. Dr. Helfferich's task is to give us information concerning Wilson's peace move and the attempts to bring about peace in the second half of the year 1916, and concerning the possibilities of peace which may have offered themselves as the result of these events. Any statement which Dr. David is supposed to have made some few days ago has absolutely nothing to do with the question, nor have the other tirades which Dr. Helfferich engaged in concerning events of a period much later than 1916 anything whatsoever in common with the thing to be proved.

Since the Chairman has at once interfered, and has stated in so many words that Dr. Helfferich's polemic attempts have a certain connection with the thing to be proved, I consider it to be my bounden duty to contradict the correctness of this view in express terms.

The CHAIRMAN: In opposition to the view just expressed by Dr. Cohn, I maintain my opinion in all respects.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency just read a statement taken from Gerard's book in a very pointed way. Now I should like to ask you to read Gerard's remarks made by him in connection with the dinner, and in which he states that, on this date and shortly beforehand, the definite assurance was given him that the unrestricted U-boat would, under no circumstances, be launched. I ask you to be good enough to read this statement, too. It is possible that Dr. David's remark is based on this premise.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I have not the book before me, nor have I this remark so absolutely literally in mind as all that. That Mr. Gerard asserts that at that time quieting assurances were given him is probably true. But I have reason to doubt whether such assurances were given to him. Moreover, the only thing that interests me is that Mr. Gerard, in terms, and, in fact, in the very words which I used, recognizes the uprightness of the then chief of the political department.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I had requested your Excellency to be good enough, since in the course of your tirade against a remark that was made outside, you were relying upon passages read out of a book, that you would read further passages too. I note that that has not been done.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I note that I can not read whole volumes to the committee. (Merriment.)

Delegate DR. COHN: There is no need here for complete citations from Gerard's book. I should only like to request Dr. Helfferrich, in connection with this very Gerard dinner, to tell us here what his own participation was, so far as the events of this dinner are concerned, and to tell us about the peace talk which he addressed to Mr. Gerard at that time. It is quite possible that Mr. Gerard intentionally limited his encomiums concerning uprightness to the Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg.

The CHAIRMAN: Is your Excellency in a position to meet the desire expressed by the remarks of Dr. Cohn? Or would you prefer to come back to this point only after your own statement has been made, and consequently, postpone an explanation on matters which have just come up, to that time?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I should prefer, first of all, to continue with my statement, and to limit the individual points which may arise here to the so-called cross-examination which is to follow.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I shall ask you to proceed at once.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Ladies and gentlemen, before I proceed I must at least say this much: If I took up the remark made by Minister of State Dr. David, there was a very vital reason for me to do so in the capacity of a witness who has been asked to testify here; for, if a gentleman who, in his capacity as Minister of State, takes part in the sessions of this committee, and is entitled to enter into the discussion of matters here, takes occasion to speak in public concerning matters which still remain points regarding which I have yet to testify, and characterizes these matters as "established facts," referring beyond any question of doubt to this investigating committee at the same time, this, to me, constitutes a premature meddling in the matter which I can not allow to pass without protest. It was for this reason that I mentioned this incident in the course of my remarks. I may now venture, perhaps, to continue with the discussion of the matter before us.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: May I say a word in reply?

The CHAIRMAN: Minister Dr. David, I shall have to ask you to allow the witness, for the present, to terminate his remarks in connected form, and reserve all comments which have to do therewith, until a later phase of the hearing.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: That was my purpose too. For this reason, I shall not at present go into the matter of remarks made by the witness. But since the witness has stated here again and again that I made improper remarks on Sunday, I shall simply state briefly, and for the moment, that I shall not fail to answer him in kind. (Laughter from the audience.)

The CHAIRMAN: I ask that all expressions of approval or disapproval be refrained from. I have already had repeated occasions to express this urgent request. I now ask that this urgent request be literally complied with. I shall otherwise find myself under the obligation of clearing as much of the hall as is set apart for the audience.

I now ask your Excellency to continue.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Reverting now to the issue before us, I should like to express my view that, even without the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, Wilson's new peace move would not only have failed to lead to a peace which would have been acceptable to us, but would, in all probability, have terminated in bringing our relations with the United States to a crisis. It was only if President Wilson had been prepared to exert the entire weight of the power of the United States by way of pressure upon the Entente, in order to force it to a complete reconsideration of its attitude, and only if, in so doing, he had been able to meet with the support of the American people and of its representatives, that any prospect of bringing about peace could have come into being. Is there today anyone who still believes that President Wilson would have been ready to exert such pressure upon the Entente? Is there anyone who still believes this today, in view of the fact that he treated our peace proposal with unfavorable criticism in his message to the Senate, and considered that the end and aim of the Entente, the purpose of which was destruction and disintegration, was entitled to discussion; in spite of his statement to the effect that the restoration of Poland was a matter which could be taken for granted; in spite of the fact that, as early as the spring of 1916, he had felt himself too weak to bring England back to the limits of international law in her mode of conducting ocean warfare because of the fact that the business interests of the United States were so interwoven with those of the Entente; and in spite of the testimony given us by his Secretary of State Lansing with regard to the fourteen points which, in October, 1918, he guaranteed us as a basis for peace, and which, later, on the occasion of his conferences with the Entente in Paris, hardly came to be mentioned at all? It is very certain that Wilson would, perhaps, have exerted pressure for the purpose of bringing about peace, but

the pressure would not have been exerted upon the Entente, but upon us. Already, in October, 1916, he had indicated in a speech that the condition of remaining neutral would soon come to an end and that the war had assumed such proportions as, sooner or later, to make a maintenance of the neutral attitude by the neutral Powers impossible. Even in his note of the 21st of December, 1916, there was to be found a passage which stated that the interests of the United States had been deeply affected by the war, and that the United States was frankly bound to take counsel as to the methods best adapted to the safeguarding of its interests in case the war should continue. On the day that this note of the 21st of September, 1916, was delivered, and even before the question of the unrestricted U-boat war had been reconsidered by us, Secretary of State Lansing stated to the representatives of the American press, in the course of an interview with them, that America was on the verge of war. Everyone understood what this meant; it meant on the verge of war with Germany. And on the very same day, on which quite a good deal of excitement existed as the result of this announcement, he sought to weaken its effect, to tone it down; but the announcement could not be lived down.

As a result of all this, we see how great the danger was at that time, even without the U-boat war, that President Wilson, in carrying out the part of peace mediator to which he laid claim, would, in the end, have brought us a mediation with the butt of his rifle, and that it is quite possible that, in the further course of his mediation—personally, I might go as far as to say that it is quite probable—he might have confronted us with the alternative of submitting to those conditions which suited him or seeing the United States go over to the camp of our enemies. That is the logical inference which I have ventured to draw from the announcements of Wilson and Lansing, and which I have ventured to bring to your attention, provided that you have not been aware of it up to this time. This conclusion, moreover, is confirmed by the well-known dialogue between Wilson and McCumber before the American Senate Committee of Foreign Affairs. The significance of the colloquy has been made the subject of much comment of late. I believe that, in view of what I have just stated, this significance stands out still more clearly. In this colloquy President Wilson, after considerable parrying and counter-parrying, finally admitted that he believed that the war with Germany would have come about in any event and irrespective of the U-boat war.

It certainly seems as if, in spite of all this, and in spite of our experiences at Versailles, there will always be people in Germany who will sing the praises of Wilson as an upright man and as a man who favored peace, and who will place the blame for the prolongation of the war upon their own country. This policy of self-flagellation, of self-abasement, has actually come to be a German disease.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask you to confine yourself to facts, as much as possible, which have an actual connection with Wilson's peace mediation move.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I will venture to express the hope that the testimony given before this committee, and the facts thereby established, may, to a certain extent, counteract this injurious disease.

And now I have to answer the question of the Chairman concerning the actual results of the U-boat war.

The answer is not easy. We all know how matters turned out; yet that is not the point which interests us, but to know how it happened that things terminated as they did. In this connection, we must examine the technical, economic, military, and political effects, and the technical, economic, military, and political counter-effects which manifested themselves on our side as well as on the side of our enemies. The ultimate result which we have all experienced is but the sum of these complicated forces.

Another point of difficulty is that even today we have not a clear conception of many elements of the situation in which our enemies found themselves. The British statistics, and the announcements made by the British concerning all matters of an economic nature, were excellent and without a flaw up to the time that the U-boat war began. Then, with regard to all interesting points, they stopped short; and, up to the present time, I have been unable subsequently to obtain absolute clarification concerning these matters.

Even with regard to the sinkings, that is, with regard to the purely technical results, doubts have been raised as to the correctness of the figures which have been published by our Admiralty. Recently, Delegate Gothein made a comparison of the figures of the Admiralty Staff with the figures published by the British Admiralty. I have before me an excerpt from the published statement of the British Admiralty, and I can establish the following with the aid of this excerpt—we are speaking now only of British ships, and not of neutral ships.

The number of British merchant ships lost during the war—including fishing craft, which, however, did not figure to an important extent—was 7,831,000 tons, and 8,008,000 tons of merchant shipping were damaged, making a total of 15,839,000 tons.

So that this makes 15,838,000 tons of lost and damaged ships, of a total English tonnage of about 20,000,000 tons at the beginning of the war.

Recently, Delegate Gothein, if I understood him correctly, made the statement that a disproportionate amount of tonnage had been lost by running upon mines. If I understood him correctly, he assumed that the greater part had been destroyed by mines—

(Delegate GOTHEIN: That was a mistake!)

—It was, as a matter of fact, a mistake. 673,000 tons were destroyed by

mines, and 6,635,000 tons by U-boats; in other words, ten times as many; 432,000 tons were damaged by mines, and 7,335,000 tons, or twenty times as many, by U-boats.

Now if I take up the public statements made by our Admiralty Staff, my calculation is that, of the world tonnage, not the British tonnage, 19 million tons, in round numbers, were sunk. I do not know whether this is correct. I have taken pains to add together the individual figures which came to my knowledge. Of this amount, 5 million tons were sunk during the period preceding the 1st of February, 1917, and 14 million tons during the succeeding period. Exactly what was sunk in the way of British ships has only been published from time to time. If I take as a general criterion the resulting proportion, according to these figures, I would reach the conclusion that from 11 to 13 million tons of English shipping was sunk, as against from 7 to 8 million tons of shipping sunk, and a total of 15.8 million tons both sunk and damaged, according to the British figures. So you see that the figures of our Admiralty Staff lie midway between the British figures for vessels that have been sunk and those vessels which have been sunk and damaged. The explanation which was given here a short time ago, that a number of the ships which were announced as injured by the British and were assumed to have been sunk by us, would, according to this, appear to be correct. But, in any event, it is certain that the total shipping which was sunk according to our statistics (19 million tons), that formed a part of the total world's tonnage of between 45 and 50 million, and the approximate 16 million tons of shipping which were sunk and injured according to English statistics, that formed part of the tonnage of England, which at the commencement of the war was about 20 million, show that the technical results reached were quite enormous. The technical results reached their climax in the months of April and July, 1917, according to both German and British computations. During both these months they had amounted to more than a million tons, according to our reports. Ever since the autumn of 1917, a very noticeable decrease in results became apparent, and a still more definite decrease from May, 1918, on. I believe that we can say that the decrease which commenced in the autumn of 1917 is very definitely attributable to the increase in efficiency of counter-measures. So that, at this point, the technical and military counter-measures of our enemies made themselves constantly more apparent from this time on.

Now as to the economic results. There was greater difficulty in ascertaining what these results were than was the case in ascertaining the technical results, and this was due to the fact that in February, 1915, the British Government either limited or completely stopped the publication of the most important statistical items, whether relating to statistics covering shipping traffic, to statistics covering imports of the most indispensable articles, particularly foodstuffs, or to announcements by the British trade

journals of the grain supply or the increase or decrease of the same. All of this material became no longer available as early as the month of February or shortly thereafter. The figures covering a number of well-known objects of importation which have been published for March, serve as a basis for calculation. In this connection, we may note the following decreases in comparison with March, 1916, the corresponding month of the preceding year: wool, 33 per cent; cotton, 53 per cent; iron and steel, 63 per cent, and wood, 64 per cent. Unfortunately, amounts in gross covering food-stuffs were no longer available for February, and for March they were not procurable at all.

However, we are afforded certain bases of calculation by the figures covering the grain shipments from the Atlantic ports of the United States, so far as the grain supply of England and of its associated Powers during the critical period is concerned. As late as August, 1916, the wheat shipments from these ports had amounted to 25 million bushels, as against 14 million for the preceding year; in other words, nearly twice as much. That was still the situation in August, 1916. The reversal came in September, when the new crops were gathered. As early as September, 1916, American shipments amounted to 14.5 million, as against 16.5 million in the preceding year, and in December, 12.3 million, as against 23.8 million in the preceding year; in the five months of January to May, 1917, the shipments stood at 17 million bushels, in round numbers, as against 120 million the year before. In the month of May itself, we find 11 million, as against 22 million in the preceding year. That is the impression which we receive from the American statistics covering grain shipments which were not only going to England but to other countries outside of Germany, concerning the cutting down in the matter of grain supplies for the Entente at that critical period. You will admit that this falling off, as represented by the above, is extremely marked. June brought an increase in figures; but, unfortunately, my reports terminate with the month of June. I have heard from other sources that in June or July the imports were supposed to have been better than in nearly the whole of the preceding five months together. America made the greatest efforts, by cutting down her own needs, to supply England at this quite critical moment and to pull her out of the hole she was in.

England was doing all that she possibly could to escape from our clutch. Hand in hand with technical counter-measures, which I am not called upon to mention and concerning which I am, moreover, not competent to speak, strong economic counter-measures made themselves felt. England forbade the importation of all products which were in any way unnecessary, and concentrated upon importation of products which were absolutely and capitally essential to the country and to its conduct of the war. For instance, at that critical time, those ships which were fitted out with refrigerating

plants for transporting meats were, without more ado, taken over for purposes of grain transportation in order to be able to bring in the grain, of which at that time there was an extreme shortage in England. Further, England increased the uses to which its shipping space could be put, to the fullest possible extent, partly by unifying the control, and partly by heavier loadings. She withdrew her ships from all those lines which were not serving directly for the supplying of England with foodstuffs, to such an extent that, according to the statement made by the British Minister of Commerce, nothing but the skeleton of Great Britain's oceanic traffic was left. The neutral Powers were forced under the strongest kind of pressure to take up ocean traffic with England. The whip of hunger was not only brandished over our backs, but over those of the neutral Powers as well. The taking over of German tonnage all over the world, to the extent that countries with which we had not the remotest connections, such as Siam and other States, were forced to take part in the war against us—this taking over of German tonnage which was stolen from us over there, is well known. And in addition to this came the taking over of neutral tonnage. I recall the tremendous pressure which England brought to bear upon Holland in March, 1918, by means of the steely grip of hunger, at a time when the situation was openly critical, and where England not only put into effect the law of angary, of which Professor Schücking spoke a little while ago, but actually forced Holland to give up ships adapted to ocean commerce, and even ships from out of Dutch ports—I believe there were 300,000 tons of such shipping—and to put it at the disposal of the Entente. The Dutch made the best defense they could; they turned to us for help. If at that time we had been able to help them out with grainstuffs, we would have made it possible for them to oppose these measures. We could not do this, however, to the extent that Holland demanded, and so Holland was forced to bow to the yoke of hunger and to involve herself in an unneutral policy by delivering to England ships from her own ports.

And finally came those efforts on a great scale, which I recognize—which I am free to acknowledge to be characteristic of a firm resolution, of the tight organization, of the determination, and of the resolute will on the part of the English to hold out—those measures looking toward increased production in their own country, carried out on a grand scale, the results of which could not, of course, blossom into full bloom in a few months time, but only at the close of the next year or the year after that; the great agricultural program, increase in the felling of trees, increased iron-ore production, and more along the same line.

Put briefly, those were the economic counter-measures which England adopted. Of course, during the first half of the year 1917, all these matters were made subjects of repeated reference in this hall—subjects of reference on my part, too, which were by no means painted in golden colors, as I have

often since that time been charged with having done, but—and I believe I am justified in so stating—they were stated cold-bloodedly and in a very matter-of-fact manner, as it is proper to do amongst serious men.

I not only did not spread abroad the thought that the unrestricted U-boat war would bring about results in a few months, but I actually opposed the idea in so many words. It is true that I expressed the hope that we would succeed in making England ready for peace before it became possible for the United States to take an effective hand in the war; but in conscious opposition to the positive assertion, or to holding out the prospect of any definite time wherein this should be done, on the 31st of January, 1917, after expressing this hope, I added this qualification in so many words: "Naturally, nobody can undertake to guarantee that this will happen."

The CHAIRMAN: Those counter-measures which would be undertaken on a great scale precisely in the economic field were foreseen, were they not? Or were they not taken into the reckoning when the unrestricted U-boat war was proclaimed?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: You can not foresee everything that is going to happen in the world.

The CHAIRMAN: Naturally, not in detail, but only in the main.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: But I always did expect, in the main, that the British, with that stubbornness which is peculiar to them, would defend themselves to the very last, and in the earlier sessions of the Reichstag I explained—I called attention in so many words, as well as in the telegram which was read aloud, to the fact that, so far as America was concerned, if the United States came into the war, it might be possible that America would impose restrictions on her own needs in order to support the British; and this is what occurred, too.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, in the memorial of the 22d of December, the sum total of all these counter-measures, technical, economic and military—which is really quite obvious—was not taken into consideration, and for that reason I should like to ask your opinion concerning the bases of that memorial of the 22d of December and its scientific importance—that memorial concerning which, it is true, you have expressed yourself in the records to a certain extent—I should like to have you tell us about these matters in this connection.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I believe, Dr. Sinzheimer, that if, as a matter of fact, I am to be called upon to criticize the memorial of another department, that it would be better to put this off until we reach those dialogues which are to follow.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You have already gone to such an extent in your criticisms, your Excellency, that it may well be that the present is a good time for expressing yourself on the point.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I can only state that it was not in the silence

of my chamber, but here in the Reichstag, that I repeatedly commented upon the fact that, in England, we had to do with a stubborn opponent who knew how to organize, and that England would do all possible to escape from our clutch. And I may venture to call to your attention that I referred to and made the subject of particular comment before the main committee all those measures to which I have alluded here.

Délegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I would, however, request you to make us at this time a statement concerning the authority of the memorial. For we have decided that this ought to be done.

The CHAIRMAN: If I have understood you correctly, your Excellency, you intend to do this in the course of later remarks. But for the present you would like to terminate your statement, would you not?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I would suggest that, if the Chairman will permit it, I finish now with my remarks.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall then ask you to continue with your remarks at the present time.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Let me repeat, then, that I opposed the thought that time limits could be set and that guarantees could be made, and that I not only did not do this casually, but did so with a clear and recognizable purpose, and by expressing myself in the terms which I have just read. I considered that it was my duty to point out how difficult the conflict would be, and I called attention again and again to those spiritual and moral forces of which we stood in need in the process of allowing our material successes to come to maturity, in order to bring about the aim which was essential for us to reach in this war, to wit, to be able to assert ourselves.

Dr. Sinzheimer, apparently for the purpose of involving me in a contradiction, read certain excerpts taken from a speech which I made on February 1, 1917. Let me, too, read a passage from this speech, which will show you in what sense I addressed myself to the main committee at that time. At that time, I said in that speech:

The resolution was made because we are convinced that the unrestricted U-boat war is the means which, as things lie today, alone is qualified to bring our opponents to reason and to shorten the period of the war. I believe that it is our duty to announce this conviction broadcast to our people. I repeat it: The die is cast. And now our motto should be, to set our teeth, to concentrate all our efforts; now our motto should be: "All together and 'go through.'"

I believe that these words too were sufficiently plain and clear. They were enough to show that I could not expect that the final result would be reached by means of the actual material effects of the U-boat war, but that those forces to which I appealed at the session of February 1, in this hall, were essential for this purpose.

Let me go forward another few months. Let me read you a passage from a speech delivered on April 30, 1917, likewise in this hall. At that time, I stated:

If I draw the conclusion, as the result of all those things which I have told you, that we shall finish with England (that was my impression at that time: that we would bring it about), then we must prepare our inmost souls to meet the fact that it is possible that everything may not move as quickly as we could wish it. But that goes without saying!

But these are matters which we are handling ourselves; we do not need to make them known to everybody. . . . I refuse to be a party to any spirit of depression! We can have no use for that!

That was the situation in the face of which the material effects of the U-boat war reached their highest point, but in which even then those secret counter-effects came into being—those effects concerning which very much more remains to be said. Not today. I know that the committee does not want that to happen, so I will, for today, pass the matter over. But later.

At that time, I voiced the most earnest warnings against these counter-measures. I stated, in direct connection with these remarks which I have just read, addressing myself particularly to the Social Democrats, who were crying for peace:

I should like to see the peace which you would be able to get for us today. We are bound to see that the French are announcing today that if they take Alsace-Lorraine and possibly the left bank of the Rhine away from us, that that is no annexation, for that belongs to them as a matter of right; that they will have to be compensated for all the losses which they have sustained during the war, for that is not a question of a war indemnity, but an "indemnity according to civil law." The Saar mining district will suit them to a "T" for just an "indemnity under civil law." And the people who are putting forward such views are French Socialists. (That is what I announced to our Socialists in those days.)

Why, you might even be able to get this kind of peace, without annexation and without indemnity, today. But I will not join you in the making of such a peace; in such case, I would rather go back to my home and mourn in sackcloth and ashes.

And in connection therewith, I quoted an article by Senator Humbert, which at that time seemed to me to give the correct view of the situation, and which today you will certainly not be able to hear without emotion. Senator Humbert wrote at that time as follows:

To such methods of waging war as the German methods, we must oppose conditions of peace which will emanate from the same spirit and be utterly without compassion. So that Germany must give back again what she has stolen; she must restore not only the value in

money of what she has destroyed, but she must restore it in kind. Germany must make reparations. Its mines, its factories, its shipyards, will deliver us coal, steel, rails, locomotives, cars, and machinery, gratis. She will have to work in order to restore to us that foundation of our well-being which she attempted to destroy. Thither, where Germany's armies of plunderers committed their acts of devastation, will she have to send her contingents of laborers, year by year, who will have to furnish by way of performance results proportionate to the numbers used hitherto in the now to be abolished military service. We shall handle as slaves that race of slaves who dreamed to become the ruling tyrants of the whole world.

That is the peace, I added, which you (the Social Democrats) could have today, and that is the peace which *we* will not have.

That occurred on April 30, 1917. Could I speak more earnestly? Could I speak more insistently? Did I not foretell our fate to you at that time here before the committee—that fate which was inevitable if we began to back and fill?

But, ladies and gentlemen, my words all went to the wind because people who in these days tell us to keep still and hush things up, did not want to listen in those days. Just at that time—I speak of April 30, the fruits of peace began to ripen. The U-boat war was making itself felt in England. I have proved it to you by those figures, proved how the effect was increasing. The war was relieving our army. The military leaders will confirm the fact that they were sending us reports to the effect that they were able to see the results of the U-boat war and to feel the relief that it gave them. Minister of War Stein confirmed that fact in so many words here before the main committee. The U-boat war played its part in making it possible for us to defend ourselves against the gigantic enemy offensives, and, above all, against the Champagne offensive of General Nivelle, which was smothered in blood and gave rise to serious mutinies in the French army. We could see in their beginnings the political effects of the tremendous pressure exerted by our U-boats. But I am not to speak about these things today, familiar parts of the picture as they are. The picture is incomplete; it is, as a matter of fact, no picture at all, as long as we do not go very closely into detail with regard to these matters.

The CHAIRMAN: That was undoubtedly true, your Excellency. The matters belong together. But, in spite of this, the question of the political situation in the summer of 1917 is to be completely avoided at this time. As a matter of fact, it would be perfectly correct to restrict ourselves, in remaining within the limits of our theme, to the discussion of whether or not the expectations which were aroused by the unrestricted U-boat war were justified. But we have determined to admit testimony concerning the commercial and technical results of the U-boat war at this time for the purpose of discussion and, on the other hand, to ignore, for the time being,

the political results of the U-boat war, since they will be given detailed consideration when the possibilities of peace in the summer of 1917 come up for discussion. This phase of the proceedings must follow undeviatingly the program of the possibilities of peace considered in connection with Wilson.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Of course, I submit to this disposition of the matter. Consequently I shall omit individual statements which, in my opinion, I should make with regard to this point, which is not only important, but is absolutely conclusive, and I shall content myself today with establishing the fact that there is an omission existing here which must be filled out later. I shall limit myself to the statement that in time of war not only the mass of the people, not only the number of human beings, and not only matters of technique, are the elements on which the outcome depends, but that, in war time, spiritual and moral factors work in concert with all these elements. I will limit myself to stating that Field Marshal Hindenburg said exactly at that time, in the course of commenting upon the unfortunate memorial of Count Czernin, that the outcome of the war was now, more than ever, a matter of nerves; that there are intangible elements in the psychology of people, which can not be weighed, but which, when the great decisions of the world's history are trembling in the balance, turn the scale; that the sharpest weapon becomes dull if belief therein be shattered in the minds of friend and foe.

And, ladies and gentlemen, if you want to know what my view is as to why the U-boat war did not ultimately work out, as to why it did not bring us to that goal which we sought, I will at least inform you of my opinion to this extent, an opinion which can not be proved in detail until later: the U-boat war was not brought to a successful issue because the U-boat weapon was blunted by those working from within.

I have finished what I had to say.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: The witness has taken advantage of his position on the witness stand to launch an attack against me on account of the speech which I made on Sunday in the Little Theater. I must protest at once in order that what the witness has stated here will not be published in the press as having been allowed to pass uncontradicted. In the first place, and as the basis of his attack against me, the witness relies upon a report in the *Vorwärts*, which states in the form of a brief summary what I said there as proof of the fact that the misfortune of the German people was not brought about by the revolution, but by our defeat, and that this defeat was due to military reasons and had come about before the revolution was in any way in sight. That was, in the main, the train of thought expressed from which the witness has selected the sentences which he has made the object of his attack. The speech which I made was taken by a stenographer of the Reichstag. The stenographer's report is before me.

I will admit, at the outset, that the drastic form in which this phase of my speech was, to a certain extent, reported in the *Vorwärts* was not employed by me. The pertinent part of my speech reads as follows:

The representatives of the old government accuse us of being to blame for this terrible disaster, of being to blame for the terrible want and the misery which was the result of this disaster. We protest against this charge, and we take our stand before the people with a clear conscience. They who are to blame for this defeat are those who led the people on into this war; those who spoke for the people and did not give the nation itself the right of deciding for itself questions of its own destiny. The tragic day of this war, the catastrophe of this war drama, was the 8th of January, 1917. Without the German people having any conception of what was going on, it was then resolved at the General Headquarters to launch the U-boat war. The people were told: "By this means, within six months, we shall force the enemy to his knees; by this means we shall bring it about that, within six months, the enemy shall be forced to accept the German peace of the sword, to be dictated to them by us." Today we know, today the world knows, what the game was at this time. At that time, the people knew nothing about it.

In the late summer of 1916, the German Government had requested the President of the American Republic, Wilson, to undertake a peace move. At first Wilson had refused the request on account of the American elections, but declared that he would grant it after the elections, which took place in November. And after the elections, at the end of November, our Ambassador sent word from the United States that the President was determined to undertake this peace move. He said that the precise moment was not quite settled, but that he would come out with his move before the end of the year, somewhere around Christmas.

The German people knew nothing of this. Then, on the 12th of December, it was surprised by the German peace proposal. Our secret diplomacy considered it the part of wisdom, after having requested President Wilson to make a peace move, and after he had said that he was ready to do so, to suddenly anticipate him with a peace proposal of its own.

In spite of all this, Wilson submitted his peace appeal to the nations. It is true that it was at first rejected by the Entente, but Wilson did not give up hope, and he announced this fact to our Ambassador. The latter informed us that Wilson would continue, and that he would make a second attempt.

But in the meantime, the Supreme High Command of the Army resolved to launch the unrestricted U-boat war. On January 22, President Wilson made his speech to the Senate, in which he stated that he was going to continue along the path of peace. Our Ambassador was asked to take steps at Berlin to have our peace aims disclosed and to inform us that the President had a second peace move in mind.

That was the situation. Of this the German people knew nothing, and before Wilson could take this second peace step the unrestricted U-boat war was announced, although our Ambassador had informed

us that the unrestricted U-boat war would with absolute certainty bring America into the war against us.

And so it happened. On February 1, 1917, the unrestricted U-boat war was launched. Shortly thereafter the United States broke off diplomatic relations and a few days later declared war against us.

So it was that the German people, without their knowledge, were led into a war with the United States. What was the significance of this? It meant that the European War changed to the World War.

Those are my words. The reporter of the *Vorwärts* summarized them in a very drastic way, to the following effect:

He pointed out that, according to the latest facts established, the German people had been misled in the U-boat question and in regard to the negotiations with Wilson.

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Read on, it goes further than that.)

—That will come. But first, this one thing. The German people were misled, that is, the Reichstag, which was at the head of the German people. The Reichstag was not informed that Wilson had been requested by the German Government to bring about a peace move. Of this the Reichstag knew nothing. It knew nothing of the dispatches which Count Bernstorff had sent to Berlin and which were sent in connection with the fact that the President had announced that he was ready to consider such a peace move at such time as would give promise of results. At the same time, at the critical time in December, another neutral Power undertook to make a peace move which, in the nature of a supplementary step, was of enormous importance. This matter is not being treated publicly here, because it involves a neutral Power. But the fact itself can certainly be made a matter of public mention here, that in the second fortnight of December, peace mediation was suggested by a neutral Power which was of such a kind as to have every reason to be considered of extraordinary promise and which was bound to be judged in connection with, and as a reinforcement of Wilson's peace move. Of this, the Reichstag knew nothing. Had the Reichstag known of this, then the Center party would certainly have refused, under any and all circumstances, to permit everything to be thwarted as the result of the unrestricted U-boat war. It was in this way that the Reichstag was deceived.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, I do not consider it appropriate for us to express our judgments concerning this peace move on the part of the neutral Power, in such clear-cut terms and with such certainty, because, unless the public can be informed in some way as to whether or not this judgment is founded on fact, it is possible that conceptions of a very definitely one-sided nature may be inspired in the public mind. The purpose of these proceedings, to the extent that they can be made public, is to permit the public to form its own judgment to the very greatest possible extent. This is impossi-

ble, in so far as matters are brought up which can and should be made only the subject of conferences behind closed doors. For the following reason, I do not consider it right for judgments to be announced in open session concerning these matters which can not be publicly treated.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: I simply referred to this incident because it constitutes an incident of extraordinary moment, so far as my judgment is concerned, to wit, that the German people were then left in the dark and led on to their ruin with a bandage about their eyes.

Then, on the 28th, Count Bernstorff's telegrams again arrived, stating that the announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war would bring the United States into the war. His efforts to bring about a postponement were kept from the knowledge of the Reichstag, and the German people knew nothing of it. Bernstorff's conclusive telegram was the message of the 28th of January stating that the President had again declared that he was ready to take up the matter of peace mediation, that he would make a peace move, and Bernstorff most insistently requests a postponement.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: This was reported.

Minister DR. DAVID: The German people, the Reichstag, knew nothing of it.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: In your presence, and in a secret session, this was read to the members of the main committee. You yourself made a speech at the time.

Minister DR. DAVID: At a secret session that took place after the U-boat war had been determined upon.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Count Bernstorff's telegram of January 28th was not sent off until after the U-boat resolution of the 9th of January.

Minister DR. DAVID: And afterwards, we were told in an open session that the peace conditions on the basis of which we were ready to negotiate, had been sent to President Wilson personally by confidential channels.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The whole telegraphic exchange was read aloud, word for word.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: At this moment, without knowing of what had gone on before, this suggestion of Count Bernstorff's, to the effect that our peace conditions should be disclosed, looked, standing alone, as if it were a very important matter, and we hoped that on this account we might be able to handle matters so that the United States would remain neutral. We knew nothing about Count Bernstorff's communications to the effect that it was vain to expect such neutrality if the unrestricted U-boat war was announced; and that is the conclusive point. So it was that the Reichstag was led blindfolded to its fate. That is what I wanted to say in my speech, and that is in accordance with the facts.

The *Vorwärts* then proceeded to add:

Whereas they were engaged in a barefaced attempt to deceive Wilson.

I did not make use of this phrase, and, moreover, it exceeds the limits of what I did say. What that was, I have read to you. I assert that I considered it thoroughly unwise and disloyal diplomacy, after we had invited President Wilson to undertake a move in the interests of peace, to anticipate him in this way and then place him in a situation which, in any case, he was bound to look upon as difficult and embarrassing. In my speech to the main committee on the 31st of January, 1917, which has already been referred to, I treated the whole situation upon the supposition that it was still possible, perhaps even then, to hold America neutral so far as we were concerned. I did not have much hope, but I believed that there was still some. Had I known what the history of the case was, had I known of the exchange of telegrams between our Ambassador and the Foreign Office, I would no longer have entertained this hope, and it is possible that, at that time, my party would have passed more far-reaching resolutions. The conclusive point for us was not the realization of the peace move, eagerly as we would have welcomed that step, for we, of course, knew nothing of the origin of the Wilson peace move, but the object which we were seeking to obtain was to thwart the plan of the Allies to bring the United States into the war against us. But everything that was done in Berlin, the whole U-boat war diplomacy, directly provoked the United States into war, and this is the grave accusation which I make: The German people, the Reichstag, would have opposed this if it had had any conception of what was going on. So it was that they were deceived during those most vital hours which have ever come to pass in the history of our people, and so it was that they were led on to their fate with a bandage about their eyes.

Imperial Chancellor v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Minister of State Dr. David is confirming, in repetition of his Sunday speech, the statement that the German people were left in the dark and were deceived, and he has done so in a form which involves the gravest of accusations. To this charge he has added the further charge that I conducted a disloyal policy toward the United States. This accusation, too, is one which can not be exceeded in gravity and sharpness. This accusation is hurled out into the world in open session. I shall not sit supine under the burden of this accusation. I request that the committee will reach a conclusion as quickly as possible on the point as to whether it agrees with the view of the Minister of State.

The CHAIRMAN: The view of the committee—I have not been able to get the views of the committee on the matter, but I believe that I may venture to express myself on the point; if there are other views than mine which I shall mention here, I beg that they be announced—is to the effect that it is not the task of the committee to form at the present stage a definite judgment along these lines and to announce this judgment publicly. We have to confine ourselves to getting at the bottom of the facts, as his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg has repeatedly and in so many words char-

acterized the task of the committee to be. So that we can not consider an appeal of this kind.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Then I request that at least it be announced in the name of the committee that Minister of State Dr. David is not competent to anticipate the findings of the committee by the statements which he has made in a very pronounced way and while occupying a position of authority. I ask that this be made a matter of record, and be most emphatically so made.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: In the course of my remarks, I made no personal allusion to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg—

(Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I am the responsible party.)

—I will state at once why I have not mentioned you by name, and this was because I am strongly convinced of the fact that the political branch was not at that time completely in accord with itself and did not act as a unit. The charge of disloyal policy was primarily addressed to the person then at the head of the Foreign Office who, on the 10th or 11th of December, confidentially informed the press: "We will make our peace proposal in order that we anticipate a possible peace move by Wilson." That is such a disloyal course—

The CHAIRMAN: I beg you Mr. Minister of State; criticisms of this kind can not be permitted to pass. We are not a house of parliament.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: That was the basis of the charge of a disloyal policy which has just been criticized by Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg. I consider that this is absolutely correct, in so far as it is applied to this phase of the question, and that it was carried out by the then Secretary of State Zimmermann. Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg personally had no intention of carrying on this disloyal policy, I am convinced; but so far as its effect on America is concerned, that is what it must be conceded to be. As a matter of fact, that is just what it was.

Witness Imperial Chancellor v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should like to put the question to the committee, whether the purpose of this meeting is to have members of the government bring the severest accusations against officials of the former government, and this before the public—

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: And I shall leave the hall!)

—I have been informed, up to this time, that the purpose of this committee is to establish facts, and I have been invited to come here as a person from whom information is to be obtained. But I am not standing here for the purpose of having an official of the present government fling such accusations in my face before the whole world.

The CHAIRMAN: I am thoroughly of the opinion expressed by his Excellency Bethmann, and I have just made my view known by announcing to Mr. Minister of State David that these remarks, being of the kind that they are and in the form in which they are clothed, are not in accord with what is

actually the purpose of our entire proceedings here; that they should never go so far as to take the form of such criticism, particularly criticism which involves such sharp reproaches as these. I believe that it will be right for the committee to take occasion to withdraw, in order that I may make an announcement which will reflect the attitude of the committee in its entirety. But before we do so, Minister of State David still has the floor.

Minister DR. DAVID: Gentlemen, I was not the one who brought up this discussion—

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: On Sunday.)

—I did not speak here last Sunday. I did not start this discussion here before the committee. In the course of his statements on the stand, the witness launched an extremely sharp attack against me—an attack under conditions where it was not pertinent, and that gave me the right and, gentlemen, it imposed upon me the obligation, of completely refuting this charge. I was bound to defend myself against the charge which he raised against me, and I have said not one word which went beyond the proper limits of this justification.

Witness Secretary of State DR. ZIMMERMANN: Mr. Minister of State Dr. David has made a number of political speeches before this committee. I should have supposed that a representative of the present government would have held a position far removed from immediate contact with the situation, and that he would have been thoroughly imbued with the spirit of fairness which characterizes this investigating committee. We must listen to what Mr. Minister David has to say, and we have not the right, as we have in the main committee, to take the floor at once and to answer him. This charge of disloyalty which he has made against me is an unheard-of charge, and I repudiate it absolutely. I repudiate it all the more because I have recently gone in detail into the stand which I took. I told the Minister of State, and I told him, in fact, at his own suggestion, that at that time I had invited the press to take part in a confidential conference, and that, to be sure, I announced to the press at that time: "We desire to anticipate Wilson." I explained in detail the reason why I made that announcement. Gentlemen, the Foreign Office at that time was distinctly not in favor with the public; the Foreign Office had the reputation of being lax, and if I had said to the gentlemen: "We are doing the whole thing merely on account of the danger of the U-boat war, or we are doing it out of considerations which commend us to avoid the danger of the U-boat war," in all probability a number of the gentlemen would have stoned me, and the confidence that existed between us, to a certain moderate extent, would have been completely destroyed. Thus it was for tactical considerations that I resorted to this ruse, and for the Minister of State to dare to accuse me of disloyalty to Wilson because I stated something in a confidential conference made to trustworthy gentlemen who in every respect were

entitled to the confidence and who did not gossip about it, is without precedent. So, once more, I repudiate it absolutely.

So far as the impression upon the United States is concerned, gentlemen, nothing was heard about this matter in the United States, thanks to the trustworthiness of the gentlemen who were invited at that time by me to confer. They were, I repeat it, not gossips with respect to whom every word that was said had to be carefully weighed. And, subsequently, these gentlemen have, in part, justified my action, to the effect that, if I made use of these tactics at the time, they were perhaps the correct tactics to employ in order to preserve a spirit of good feeling toward the Foreign Office. For the rest, let me remind you of the celebrated dinner with Ambassador Gerard, which has been brought up to us time and again by the Minister of State. We never said a word beforehand to Mr. Gerard to the effect that a U-boat war would not be launched. All pure invention. Nor did we tell Mr. Gerard beforehand what he was to say. His speech took me completely by surprise—

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Me also.)

—But I called attention to this—Count Bernstorff's telegram is before you—that Ambassador Gerard, when he heard of my appointment to the office of Secretary of State, was particularly gratified, and said: "That will have a particularly good effect upon the relations between Germany and the United States." The Minister of State laughs! But, at any rate, it showed that the Ambassador had faith in me, and had faith in me to the end.

Nothing was ever known in the United States about all these stories, about this "disloyalty" of which the Minister accuses me. I repeat that I must protest in the sharpest form against this charge.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will withdraw for the purpose of a short conference concerning the announcement. (Withdraws accordingly.)

At 12:56 o'clock the committee continues with the open hearing.

The CHAIRMAN: In the name of the committee, I make the following announcement, which is unanimous:

Under the constitution, the investigating committee is an independent body, the purpose of which is the investigation of facts. The final announcement of the result of its investigations can only be made after the evidential matter before it has been exhausted. Judgments based upon the opinion of those who are not members of the committee are, therefore, not binding upon the committee. To the extent that the manner of making statements in this hall has given rise to protests, it has been censured by the chairman and will continue to be made the subject of censure by the chairman in any given case, as is to be taken for granted.

We shall now hear what Dr. Schücking has to say.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Your Excellency, in justification of your lack

of confidence in the American mediation in the interests of peace, you have pointed, among other things, to the manner in which the American Government treated questions of international law. Now, of course, it can not be denied, in view of what you have said, that the American Government pressed us most insistently to handle matters of naval warfare in a correct manner, whereas, unfortunately, the action of the United States directed toward having the British observe the correct principles in their handling of matters arising under the laws of sea warfare was limited to protests upon paper. But over and beyond this, you touched upon certain questions of international law which I would be very glad to discuss with you because, of course, there is a very definite interest in not making charges against foreign States which can not be absolutely justified, even if we have been at war with those States.

In this connection, let us, first of all, revert to the question of the delivery of ammunition by the Americans. If I am right in my recollection of what you said, you stated that, from the standpoint of international law, the propriety of delivering ammunition was dubious. Were you not aware of the fact that this question of the delivery of ammunition by neutrals in time of war was made the subject of definite regulations by Hague Convention No. V? I will read you the article in question. It is Article 7, and states that—

A neutral Power is not called upon to prevent the export or transport, on behalf of one or other of the belligerents, of arms, munitions of war, or, in general, of anything which can be of use to an army or a fleet.

Against the protests of certain pacifistic influences which desired to bring about the prohibition of such deliveries of ammunition by the neutral Powers, the German Empire, at the Hague Conference in 1907, adhered to this principle of international law on account of its interest in the war-material industry and commerce.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I will give a connected statement on the point in a moment.

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, your Excellency.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I am aware of the fact that, speaking only formally, the point of international law which has just been made by Dr. Schücking is correct. But, if I may venture to do so, I should like, in turn, to ask Dr. Schücking whether he is not of the opinion that, granting that it was not Wilson's formal duty to stop the exportation of ammunition, he would have been, nevertheless, wholly justified in doing this without calling down upon his head the reproach of having committed any violation of neutrality; but that, on various occasions, President Wilson stated that he could not issue an embargo on ammunition because the interests of a belligerent would be injured thereby, and because such action would constitute an unneutral dealing. My observation was not only limited in its reference

to both sides of Wilson's attitude, and for that reason I stated—I admit, perhaps, too vaguely—that different opinions might be entertained on this question. In this connection, I was less interested in the purely formal side of the question than in the matter-of-fact features of it, and, so far as those matter-of-fact features are concerned, I compared the attitude that Wilson actually assumed toward Mexico some time previous thereto, with the attitude which he assumed towards us; and, in this connection, I said that if, under these conditions, there was anyone who had a straight path cut out before him which should lead to a neutral attitude, not only neutral as a matter of formality, but neutral as a matter of fact, that man was Wilson; for in the case of Mexico, in February, 1914, he announced that, since Carranza had no harbors and Huerta did have harbors, the permission to import arms would only benefit one of the belligerents.¹ He stated, I believe, that that would constitute no such real neutrality as is incumbent upon every self-respecting nation to observe, but a pure “paper neutrality” with which I, Wilson, refuse to have anything to do. That is what I had in mind.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: But in opposition to this view, there is the following which is to be said. In the first place, the President of the United States, whose attitude in this connection is of the first importance in respect to our political question, was absolutely without authority, as a matter of law, to announce an embargo on arms or an embargo on ammunition. On this point, the American State Department made the following announcement, word for word, on October 15, 1914:

Neither the President nor any executive department of the government possesses the legal authority to interfere in any way with trade between the people of this country and the territory of a belligerent. There is no act of Congress conferring such authority or prohibiting traffic of this sort with European nations, although in the case of neighboring American republics (and I now come to your second objection, which concerns Mexico) Congress has given the President power to proclaim an embargo on arms and ammunition, when in his judgment it would tend to prevent civil strife.

So that, only for the case of Mexico had the President a particular legal authority to act within the limits legally provided, to wit, that the case should be one applying to neighboring American republics, and that it would constitute, in the opinion of the President, a measure necessary to be adopted in order to avoid domestic civil conflict. According to this, your Excellency will also undoubtedly consider the point settled, that the President could not, in such case, in view of the existing American law on the subject, interfere without a change in legislation being made.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Did Delegate Dr. Schücking know that the President of the United States ever made the slightest effort to obtain the legal authorization which would be required according to the above? I

¹ See note on p. 656.—EDITOR.

never knew of anything of the kind. On the contrary, I do know that the President was requested even by American circles to take steps in this direction. In order to keep within the bounds of the question of American neutrality, I may, perhaps, venture to read a document which has been sent in and which as prominent a man as Senator Stone who, I believe, was, during the entire period of the war, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations—the committee which plays such an important part in the United States—addressed, together with other Senators, to the President. In the course of this memorial, Senator Stone reproached the President with no fewer than twenty violations of neutrality, to wit, the following:

1. Various steps taken with regard to wireless telegrams and cables, to the disadvantage of Germany. (This point I have already mentioned.)

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: I will revert to that.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: 2. That America had sat quiet under British censorship of the American mails. That such mail was opened on neutral ships, for instance, Dutch steamers.

3. The searching of American vessels for German or Austrian nationals on the high seas and in the territorial waters of a belligerent.

4. Suffering the British, without protest, to violate the rules of international law touching conditional and absolute contraband, as such contraband was classified in the Hague Convention, in the Declaration of London, and in international law.

(So that this does not only involve the Declaration of London, which was not yet ratified, but the Hague Conventions as well.)

5. Suffering, without protest, the placing of copper and other articles on the British lists of absolute contraband.

6. Suffering, without protest, interference in American traffic with neutral countries in matters of absolute and conditional contraband.

7. Suffering, without protest, that commercial traffic in conditional contraband be interfered with—contraband which was consigned to private parties in Germany and Austria, and, in so doing, supporting Great Britain's policy of cutting off Germany and Austria from all imports.

8. Suffering the British to interfere with commercial traffic in oil, rubber, leather, wool, etc.

9. The United States did not interfere with the sale to Great Britain and her allies of weapons, ammunition, horses, uniforms and other war material, although the conflict was prolonged by these sales.

10. The United States did not forbid the sale of dum-dum bullets to England.

11. British men-of-war were allowed to lie in wait in the vicinity of American harbors and capture neutral shipping. (In this connection, I recollect the treatment of our U-53 off the American coast.)

12. Great Britain and her allies were permitted, without protest, to ignore American citizenship papers and passes.

13. To permit loans to the Entente Powers, although at first the American Government took the stand that loans to all belligerent States would be improper.

14. Arrest of native-born Americans on neutral ships and in British harbors and their imprisonment.

15. Indifference to the imprisonment of non-combatants in English and French detention camps.

16. Failure to prevent the passage of British troops and British war material over United States territory.

17. Treatment of the German warship *Geier* and the German coaling vessel *Locksum* and their final internment at Honolulu.

18. Unfairness to Germany in the matter of measures passed regarding the coaling of warships of the Canal Zone.

19. Failure to protest against the modification of the Declaration of London by the British Government.

20. General unfriendly attitude of the government toward Germany and Austria.

That is a long list, in which the ammunition question set out in point 9 plays its part, too. But I was not aware that the President met in any way whatsoever the requests which were made to him to issue an embargo, or that he made any attempt of any kind to obtain the legal authority which would have made it possible for him to issue an embargo against the export of ammunition which, looked at from the standpoint of international law, could certainly have been accomplished without any violation of neutrality.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: You mean that it would have been in accordance with international law, assuming that it would have been possible at that time to take the subsequent step of forbidding the export of ammunition. Attempts were made along these lines by the American pacifists. Bartholdt submitted a resolution to that effect. Then, as you have already suggested, on this occasion Wilson made the point that legal difficulties were in the way; and, as a matter of fact, the American Government was in a position to refer to the fact in an American note, that, given the circumstances that certain principles of neutrality had been announced, it followed that, generally speaking, it would be looked upon as violative of international law, or at least as an unfriendly act, if these principles of neutrality were subjected to a subsequent change; that this was expressly announced in the third paragraph of the preamble of Article 13, which deals with the rights and obligations of neutrals. Were you aware of that fact?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: At the moment I did not have that in mind. As a matter of fact, I had at that time nothing to do directly with this question—only indirectly. But it was always one of very great interest to me. However, I should like to add the following on the point.

If it is an unfriendly act, not only according to the written law, but

according to diplomatic usage as well, to subsequently modify in practice principles of neutrality without sufficient reason, I believe, after all, that the British had given the American Government ample reason for making such a change; for, on their part, they had continuously modified their policy with regard to the United States. I may call attention to the fact—in order to stay within the limits of the subject of the laws of naval warfare—that, at first, the Entente accepted the Declaration of London as binding, with certain modifications, to be sure, but modest ones; that thereupon continually, by means of new orders in council, it brought about ever-increasing changes in the Declaration of London; and that, finally—I believe on July 7, 1916—it cast off the Declaration of London altogether. So that we have constant and continued changes in the field of the laws of naval warfare during the course of the war. For this reason, I believe, in spite of the principles to which Delegate Dr. Schücking has just referred, America would have been absolutely justified, on its part, in permitting subsequent changes in the principles of neutrality announced by it at the commencement of the war and based upon the binding force of the Declaration of London.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: But there certainly is a difference between a neutral Power modifying its principles of neutrality, and a belligerent State introducing modifications into its practice.

So far as neutrals are concerned, Lansing was enabled to point out in the course of an American note that the only German book which discussed this question, a book by a pupil of Professor Zorn—Einicke—states literally that:

Prohibition against commerce in contraband can be looked upon as a violation of neutrality, or at least as an unfriendly act, if it is announced during a war for the purpose of unexpectedly shutting off to one party a source of supply upon which, up to that time, that party had relied.

So that the American Government relied upon the above statement.

As things have developed, one of the parties has relied upon these American principles of neutrality, and we are now not in a position to introduce sudden changes without perpetrating an unfriendly act against this party.

I am not to be taken as identifying myself with this announcement; but it is, nevertheless, one legal aspect.

Now, you have spoken about the moral side of the delivery of munitions of war. Were you aware of the fact that the German industry in war materials availed itself of every opportunity to serve other countries who were at war, and that what we have before us at the present time are the sins of capital?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I do not believe that we are called upon to argue questions here involving the crimes of capital. (Laughter.) I be-

lieve that the discussion of a question which is not so very simple, and which is not confined to the moral aspect of whether it is right for us to admit that, according to general principles of international law, the delivery to belligerent nations of war material and of ammunition is within the limits of neutrality—I believe that a discussion on this point would really take us too far afield. I would like to call attention to the following: From the moral standpoint—from the standpoint of the international relations of peoples, once war is recognized to exist as a fact; that is taken for granted—morally speaking, we must really admit the case to be different when deliveries of ammunition are being made by neutral Powers to belligerent Powers, both of which have access to shipments of ammunition from without. That was the case in the Russo-Japanese war. Russia, as well as Japan, was in a position to be furnished with war material of all kinds by neutral nations and, as a matter of fact, both were furnished, both of them, with war materials. The peculiarity of our case, however, lay in the fact that we were wholly cut off from the outer world, not only through our geographical situation, but by means of those measures which England took, violative of international law; and that, partly due to these unlawful measures taken by England, and partly due to the circumstance of our geographical situation with regard to the United States, we were, to all intents and purposes, in the situation occupied by Carranza, who was not able to get in any ammunition, whereas his opponent was in a position to do so. This inequality of situation constitutes an abnormal case which, naturally, when we speak particularly of the moral aspect, gives an entirely different picture from that which is afforded by the circumstance of two belligerents being in equal measure enabled to draw upon supplies of ammunition and war material.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: What we have to do at the present time is to determine whether we are to pass upon the sins of a united people, or the sins of capital. To that extent, I must stick to this phrase; for the question to be decided here is whether the single nation acted with a lack of morality. You must know that the German industries did not limit themselves, in the delivery of ammunition, to those cases where both belligerent Powers could be supplied, as, for instance, in the Crimean war, and again in the wars between Turkey and Italy, but that, especially in the Boer war, where the situation was precisely no more nor less than that one side only could import ammunition, Germany sold a very great deal of ammunition to the other side. Were you aware of the fact that the American Secretary of State Lansing was in a position to call attention to this point in the following words:

During the Boer war, Germany, wholly indifferent to the commercial isolation of one of the belligerents, sold hundreds of thousands of kilograms of explosives, gunpowder, cartridges, projectiles and weapons—

and that this announcement has remained uncontradicted to this day?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Well, this may have passed through my hands at that time. It goes without saying that I can not state, under oath, whether I actually came to see this announcement of Lansing's. But I do not believe that it touches the essence of the question which concerns us here. The situation is, and remains, that we were not only cut off as the Boers were, but the further fact existed, that the other party, namely, England and her allies, for the purpose of cutting us off, allowed herself to engage in a number of violations of international law against which the United States took no action when she might have exerted an effective pressure. I should like to ask Delegate Schücking whether he, too, does not believe that Mr. Wilson and America, taken as a unit—that the American national legislature would only have had to say: "If you do not return to the fundamental principles of the Declaration of London, we shall issue an embargo on ammunition, grainstuffs and cotton." England would in this case have returned to the fundamental principles of the Declaration of London and the war would have come to an end. America did not do this, and that is the substance of my charge.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: I have already stated that the manner in which America opposed or did not oppose England is a matter of as great regret to me as it is to you, but there are other charges which have been made here. First of all, there is the following political question which as yet has not been answered: What possibilities, practically or politically speaking, existed for Wilson to bring about such a law? On this point, perhaps Count Bernstorff will give us information a little later. As a practical proposition, was there any possibility of having such a law passed in the United States?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: May I answer this question first? The answer to this precise question seems to me important. I share Delegate Dr. Schücking's doubt that the possibility ever existed so far as the President was concerned; for I take the view announced here by Count Bernstorff, that the business interests were tied up with England to such an extent that the President either could not or would not interfere to the contrary effect. But that does not relieve America of the burden of the attitude which it assumed, but, on the contrary, it is proof of the fact that the position taken by the President was not only the position of a single person, but that the essence of the entire condition which existed and which we all deplore, was more deep-set by far.

The CHAIRMAN: Count Bernstorff, would you like to take the stand on this question once more? Generally speaking, and in accordance with my recollection, you have already, in the course of your statement, announced what you had to say on the point. I do not believe that you will have anything to add to it. But if you consider it desirable to do so, I will give you the opportunity of doing it now.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I have nothing more particular to say on the point. Everyone knows that, in forming a judgment on American matters, the President alone is not the only one to be taken into consideration, but public opinion must also be taken into consideration. An American President is not at all in the position of accomplishing anything in the face of public opinion. He can influence it, perhaps, and perhaps stay it, but he can not accomplish anything against it. In order to form a judgment concerning dealings of the United States, it is essential, first of all, to be absolutely certain as to the condition of public opinion. I should like to emphasize this point particularly, because, during the first period, when public opinion in the United States was not neutral, so far as we were concerned, but unfriendly, it was not possible for the government to accomplish certain things. So far as I can judge, generally speaking, the government maintained a neutral standpoint. If my recollection is correct, the legal division of the Foreign Office has always been of the opinion that, formally speaking, the American Government was neutral.

But it goes without saying that we all knew that the public opinion of the United States was not neutral toward us as a matter of actual sentiment, but that, on the contrary, the great majority took the part of the Entente. I lay particular stress upon this fact—if I may venture, perhaps, to anticipate—because this question is also a very important one in connection with that of Wilson's peace mediation. It is so often stated that the rendition of a judgment of Wilson personally necessarily involves a judgment covering the entire peace mediation. That is a mistaken view. Public opinion in the United States had given Wilson the preference in the elections because he had maintained peace, and because he was expected to be the restorer of a general peace. So it was not that we were confronted, as has been stated here, with an untrustworthy person, but we were confronted with the outspoken attitude of the American people. Consequently, the question as to whether or not Wilson was reliable was not the issue, but the point was that the American people had expressed a definite desire. And if I may venture once more to anticipate, again at Versailles, the real situation was that the public opinion of the United States would have provided no support for Wilson even if he had taken our part. Consequently, it was impossible for him to do so.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: I should like to call attention at this point briefly to the fact that the question which is being discussed here is a political question, not merely a question of international law. This circumstance is made perfectly plain by the case of Mexico which was cited. Wilson induced Congress to permit an embargo to be laid upon the export of arms to Mexico. This proclamation was issued to the disadvantage of Huerta and to the advantage of Carranza, it is stated, because the one had the advantage of bringing in arms and the other did not; but really, for no

other reason than that, from the very beginning, Wilson opposed Huerta and, after Huerta had taken the capital, immediately sent his representative, John Lind, down to Mexico to raise a protest. The question at issue was not the question of being favorable to one or to the other, but simply the question of crushing down that candidate with whom Wilson had a personal quarrel. That was the reason for his interference. Political incidents were what moved him, and international law played no part whatsoever. If the phrase was used, that the point of the transaction was to avoid civil war in neighboring States, that was simply a question of form for the purpose of providing Congress with a good excuse. Similar modes of speech were used later in connection with Germany.

And then again, in connection with the delivery of weapons to belligerents, I should like to call attention to the fact that this objectionable capitalistic measure is not simply a German characteristic, as might appear to be the case as the result of remarks which have been made here, but that in England itself—and every one knows this whose familiarity with English history is even elementary—that just so-and-so often arms have been transported by British arms factories to people with whom England has been at war. So that English nationals themselves have been opposed in battle by enemies armed with English weapons. Those are general evils which, so far as I am concerned, may be designated as “objectionable methods of capital,” but which, above all, however, are not to be attributed to the Germans alone.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I should like to state that the remarks made by Count Bernstorff completely confirm the correctness of the view which I expressed here day before yesterday. I was not only speaking of President Wilson personally, but had particularly in mind the American business world and the public opinion of America which stood back of the President in this regard, and probably urged him onward. To my mind, this constitutes a very important feature to be taken into consideration in rendering a judgment on the situation. For my remarks, take them all in all, were not made for the purpose of meeting hypothetical situations of any and every kind; on the contrary, my task was to give my reasons here and before this committee for summing up the situation during the critical months in the way that I did, and how it was that I estimated the prospects and the serious results which might follow from American peace mediation. I believe that I have stated nothing derogatory, so far as Mr. Wilson's personal trustworthiness is concerned; I simply stated that we had nothing to expect from Wilson: nothing from Mr. Wilson personally and certainly nothing at all from President Wilson, on account of public opinion, as the latter has been so admirably described by Count v. Bernstorff. To my mind, those events which happened right at that time in January, and particularly the message of the 22d of January, constituted a striking

manifestation of this public opinion in the United States which the President guided in part, and by which he himself was, in part, guided—a public opinion which was unneutral in essence and unneutral in the given case and which manifested a cold indifference to those conditions essential to the existence of Germany, which was staggering under the weight of preconceived judgments and entwined in the chains of material interests.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: I should like to state, first of all, that I have never said that the German war-material industries, exclusively or more so than the same industries in other countries, made money out of the tears of foreign countries, but simply that this naturally constitutes an international phenomenon inseparable from the nature of war industries themselves.

Then further, your Excellency, you stated a little while ago that there was no principle of international law which would justify the United States in prohibiting us from using our wireless stations. Are you not aware of the fact that these matters, too, were made the subject of a positive regulation at the Hague Conferences and were included in the same Convention concerning the rights and obligations of the neutral Powers?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I must confess that I was not aware of those principles.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: It happened in the Eastern Asiatic war that the Japanese established stations for wireless telegraphy on Chinese territory, and from these points of vantage merrily signalled to each other and to their countrymen, giving information of the approaching Russian fleet, its formation and strength, etc. In view of experiences such as these, the intent was manifested at The Hague to prevent activities of this kind from occurring on neutral territory. And it was announced that neutrals should not be allowed to permit belligerents to establish wireless stations on their territory. Now, Count Bernstorff lately informed us that a German station for wireless telegraphy had been started, but that it had not been completed.

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: There were two when the war commenced, Tuckerton and Sayville.)

These two were not finished at that time.

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: They were both in use, so far as I know.)

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That was just the misfortune, that they had not opened. That was the misfortune of it, from the legal side.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: They had not yet opened; consequently, the United States was justified in concluding that they were entitled to take over the direction of these private stations. That happened, did it not, Count Bernstorff?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The events were as follows: Both these stations, so far as I recollect, were commenced in the year 1914 and were to

be opened to the public. But that did not take place before the beginning of the war. From our point of view, there were two particularly unlucky incidents which entered in. The first consisted in the fact that the plant had not yet been thrown open to business, and the second circumstance, which was still more unfortunate for us, was that, as a matter of fact, part of the private capital which had been subscribed for the purpose of construction was French capital. So that the first step which followed was that the French stockholders asked for an injunction in order that these stations might be immediately closed. In order to avoid closing these stations, which, with the exception of the cables, were the only means of communication with continental Europe, the American Government declared that, dismissing the private suits, it would take over the management of the stations themselves.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I believe that I have a very plain recollection of the fact that, when the war began, we communicated with Tuckerton and with Sayville by wireless. At the beginning of the war, both stations were certainly technically complete. I can not say whether there was a formal acceptance and dedication of the business to the public. But in my opinion, the point of view of whoever would have advocated taking refuge in that technicality would have been a very small and narrow-minded one. So far as the French stockholders and the American Government were concerned, I consider that the claim of the French stockholders, who constituted a very restricted minority, was absolutely without significance either in law or in international law. If the company desired to take such a step, this was a matter to be decided by the board of directors or at a general stockholders' meeting, before the step was taken, but individual stockholders could not with justice, in my opinion, submit a claim based either on private law or international law, and bring about an interference or some other such measure by a neutral government.

Expert DR. BONN: So far as the conception of the absence of material neutrality on the part of the United States is concerned, which your Excellency has described as your own, I agree with you; moreover, I have made it the matter of special comment in various articles which I have written, and which have been cited by you. And above all things, I expressed myself emphatically concerning them, in a place where it was much more essential that this be done than here, namely, in the United States.

But after all, the important point seems to me to be the following: All these facts were known to you as early as the autumn of 1916—all these facts having to do with this absence of material neutrality; but, nevertheless, if I have correctly understood you, you always took the view that it would be a great misfortune if this lack of neutrality should develop into downright hostility, and it was from this standpoint that you opposed the U-boat war. So far, so good. But I do not quite see to what extent this lack of

neutrality, which was fully known to you and which in the fall of 1916, and later than that, had no influence upon your attitude, did come to have an effect upon your attitude on the 9th of January.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Shall I answer the question at once?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, although it really is somewhat outside the field set. We only wanted to take up the international question.

Expert DR. BONN: The point involved here is the effect of the international question upon the decision of the Secretary of State. I believe that the matter is material to the general subject, but I will gladly yield and withdraw the question.

The CHAIRMAN: We will have the question decided now, since it is connected with the subject before us.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I thought that I had already stated very clearly how it was that, in forming our opinion at the critical period with regard to the situation which then confronted us, this conception of America's neutrality made its influence felt. Professor Bonn is quite right. I always drew a sharp distinction between the further adherence of the United States to the forms of this show of neutrality and the actual intervention of the United States in the war. And in making this distinction, I was, unfortunately, correct. I always called attention to the fact that the idea that the United States in the character of a belligerent would not be able to support the Entente to greater effect than was the case when America simply maintained her materially unneutral attitude, was wrong. It is for that reason that I opposed the U-boat war so long. I explained the special part which the message to the Senate of the 22d of January played in a situation in which, also in my opinion, the war was entering upon its last phase, and which involved the question of whether, in some way or other, by some step of our own or by some step taken by the United States along the path of peace, we should attain peace or fail to attain it. In the last-mentioned case, all means, risky though they might be, would have to be employed by us. And that we could not attain peace through any mediation by Wilson, after Wilson had made these statements to the Senate and to the world—this connection is certainly clear, and this connection strengthened me in the conviction that we had absolutely no reason to expect any mediation from Wilson which would result in a peace which we could accept. Thus it came about that this incident was absolutely closed for me, with the announcement of President Wilson's message to the Senate on the 22d of January, 1917. I further stated that, in view of the repeated threats that, if we could not make peace, America must take sides, the war with the United States would, in my opinion, have come even without any occasion having been provided by the U-boat war. The war would have come from some cause or other; it is likely that Wilson would have come to the point, as I stated here a little while ago, of mediating a peace by

means of the butt of his rifle. All this is founded upon the broad basis of fact which I have ventured to picture to you.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: So far as the wireless telegraphy is concerned, you knew, of course, that the stations were used later, after all.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: But subject to control.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Now, Article 8 of the above-mentioned Convention of The Hague gave the neutral Powers the right to establish such control.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: We continually return to the formal question. If the right existed, the right existed with regard to the British stations too, and in this respect it was not exercised.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Well, we will settle that question. Count v. Bernstorff will, perhaps, be able to tell us whether the British had any stations whatsoever for wireless telegraphy.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: But their cables were grounded in America.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Was no control exercised with regard to the cables?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: With regard to the cables, no.

The CHAIRMAN: Then you are right, that was a distinctly unneutral attitude to take, for, according to Article 8 of the Convention in question, the neutral Power has the right to put the use of the cables under his control, just as is the case with wireless telegraphy. In the case of wireless telegraphy, the control was exercised, but not in the case of the cables. That was a material mistake.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Perhaps I may be allowed to revert to the matter of ammunition. I have just been reminded of the fact—Professor Schücking can probably check this—that during the Spanish-American war, Ambassador White here in Berlin protested against the delivery of German ammunition to Spain, whereupon Count Bülow, who was then Secretary of State for the Foreign Office, recalled the shipments of ammunition which were destined for Spain.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The case appears to me to be of peculiar importance because, so far as America is concerned, it is the only case in which we had been enabled to reach a decision on this point. So that in the only case, I say, where, with the authority of international law, it had been quite possible for us to transport ammunition to an enemy of the United States, we refrained from doing so upon objection filed by the United States and request made. I insist that the actual and material violation of neutrality of which the United States is guilty is aggravated by the fact that the United States failed to exercise reciprocity so far as we were concerned.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Then, further, something was said about the armed merchant ships. On one occasion, Lansing drew up an excellent note, on January 18, 1916, proposing an important agreement which was to

the effect that we were to maintain ourselves within the limits of a war on commerce and, on the other hand, the Entente was not to arm any more merchant ships; then you made the charge that the United States refused to carry out this agreement.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: There is a misunderstanding on this point. There was no question of an agreement, but of a proposal on the part of Lansing. I believe that it was on the 18th of January, 1916, that Lansing directed a letter to the representatives of the Entente Powers in Washington. I merely touched upon the point; but since Delegate Schücking has gone into the matter, I must make it the subject of somewhat more detailed comment. In this letter, Lansing called attention to the peculiar nature of the U-boat weapon and, above all, to the fact that the U-boats were put out of action by the infliction of very little damage, and thereby brought to a sinking condition. He emphasized the fact that, consequently, a war conducted by means of U-boats would have to be carried on according to principles different from those which had been established up to that time, and which had been practiced without any reference whatsoever to the U-boat weapon. He laid very particular stress upon the point that it must be recognized that, in comparison with the U-boat, a merchant vessel which was also only lightly armed and the armament of which in the earlier days might be presumed primarily to be installed simply for purposes of defense—that, as regards the U-boat, such armament must be looked upon as having been installed for purposes of attack. Here is where the difficulty lies. Merchant ships which are armed for purposes of attack occupy the same position as auxiliary cruisers, and it was for this reason that Lansing, in the course of appearing to exert some slight pressure upon the Entente, made the following proposal: That our U-boats should limit themselves to the rules of war on commerce, that is, that they were to sink no merchant vessels without warning, without search, and without providing means for the saving of human lives—these are the three points involved—but that, in return, all the belligerents should desist from and prohibit the arming of their merchant ships and resisting search by the U-boats. He added, if the belligerent Powers can not accept these principles, the United States may find herself placed in a position where she will have to consider armed merchant ships of every kind, and this includes lightly-armed ships, as belligerent craft, that is, as auxiliary cruisers. There is no necessity for me to point out to you, Delegate Schücking, the great significance of the above; that would have meant that armed merchant vessels would have been subjected to all those restrictions which would apply to belligerents in the harbors of the United States, and these restrictions are so far-reaching that, by this measure alone, an effective and productive use of these ships for supplying England with food and ammunition could hardly have continued to be earnestly considered. That was the solution of the en-

tire U-boat war question. I subscribe to this note of Lansing's, word for word. That was the solution which the nature of the U-boat provided, and which was provided by a neutral attitude.

But now there occurred what I have characterized as the most extraordinary and inexplicable circumstance; perhaps Count Bernstorff can explain it. When we—the letter is of the 18th of January—at the beginning of February, in the first days of February, sent out the memorandum in which, following Lansing's line of thought exactly, we stated particularly that, in view of the character of the U-boat, and, above all, in view of orders which we had discovered on enemy merchant vessels—general orders which contained instructions to attack at once upon sighting a U-boat—when we, with these factors on which to rest our case, declared that from this time on we would treat enemy merchant ships on the theory that they were auxiliary cruisers, Wilson sent an extraordinarily sharp and violent letter, over Lansing's head, to Senator Stone, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, in which he opposed this action on the part of Germany in the sharpest and most unmistakable terms. On March 28, 1916, the American Government sent out an official memorandum based upon Wilson's standpoint, and receded absolutely from the stand which Lansing had taken on February 18 with the warring Powers by proceeding exactly along the following path of scholastic deduction: that the attitude observed by the neutrals was their own affair, but that belligerents upon the high seas, who were, first of all, affected by this policy, could only treat merchant ships as if they were auxiliary cruisers if evidence of an intent to attack was proved; otherwise, the presumption existed that they had nothing but peaceful merchantmen to deal with.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: I will admit right now that this note of Lansing's was looked upon also by me as being a very prudent solution of the whole matter, from the first day that I read it.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: There was the solution of our question and, with it, peace.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Perhaps Count Bernstorff can tell us why it was that we could not come to an agreement on this basis.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: At that time, this matter was deeply involved in the general diplomatic negotiation, and came to be tied up in a very unfortunate entanglement of diplomatic negotiations which, I regret to say, characterized all the dealings covering the two and a half years in the United States.

The conditional solution of the question of the *Arabic* had, for the moment, cleared the track so far as diplomatic negotiations were concerned. Thereupon the American Government entered into negotiations with England, and sent the well-known note to London, in which it was stated that the blockade was unlawful and could not be defended on any ground; and the

government was plainly at that time harboring the intention of taking up these negotiations. It was in this same chain of events that this note of the 18th of January was caught up, which, moreover, was not intended for publication, but only to go to the diplomats of the Entente. It was then that the negotiations with us began, looking toward the final settlement of the *Lusitania* case. These negotiations reached a critical stage toward the close of January, at the very time when the Lansing note had gone out, and to such an extent that there was absolutely nothing else to be heard in all Washington except talk of a break with us; and on the heels of these events, even before the *Lusitania* question was settled, the proposal came from Berlin to announce the intensive U-boat war; so that, with the recrudescence of the *Lusitania* question, hand in hand with the intensive U-boat war, every possibility of entering into negotiations was swept aside for the time being.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: May I be permitted to speak at this point?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, your Excellency.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I believe that Count v. Bernstorff will agree that the chronological series of events, which is of the utmost importance in this connection, is the following: In November, 1915, America finally—finally!—sent a great note of protest to England, complaining about the unspeakable violations of international law. In November, 1915! On the 18th of January, 1916, Lansing sent off his message, which I have already referred to, and which would have been of the most tremendous importance so far as the history of this war and the history of the whole world was concerned. When I was first informed of this, I asked myself: "Is he really going to exert pressure upon the Entente, a real pressure which will result in their returning to the Declaration of London?" I am now of the impression that President Wilson and Mr. Lansing did not always work together in the greatest of intimacy. We know perfectly well that, on various occasions, President Wilson has transacted matters over the heads of his secretaries of state, first over Bryan's head, and then over Lansing's head; that he has developed various important notes all by himself in his dark-room and, without consulting his minister, given instructions that they be delivered. That is undoubtedly true; I believe that it can not be controverted; the information received on this point has never been denied. I see, in the very violent letter written by President Wilson to Senator Stone, a repudiation of Lansing by the President. I assume—this is the only explanation which I have—that Lansing made his proposal without either he or the President having a clear conception of how far-reaching it would be, and that, after Lansing's note had gone out, President Wilson's British friends called his attention to this far-reaching effect, and that then it was simply a question of retracting this document. And now I would like to have Count Bernstorff tell me when it was that the *Lusitania* case came up again.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: On the 12th of December.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: As early as the 12th of December! And when did the crisis come in the *Lusitania* case?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The crisis came, according to my recollection, about the 25th of January.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: So that came later! On the 18th of January the letter to Lansing, and on the 25th of January the crisis in the *Lusitania* question, in which the Americans tried to make a *casus belli* against us on the question of whether we would be willing to go to the point of declaring that our action in connection with the *Lusitania* was illegal. I am of the impression—a little while ago I did not care to go into the matter; I said that it was wholly inexplicable to me—I already had the impression at that time that the entire *Lusitania* case was simply brought out again in more critical form in order to provide a reason for the withdrawal of the Lansing note after it had become recognized what the effect of this note would be upon the entire conduct of the war at sea, upon the U-boat war and upon the result of the war, and because this was not the result which Wilson wanted. It was for this reason that we were placed face to face with the tremendous proposition: "If you do not admit that the sinking of the *Lusitania* was illegal, and if you do not subscribe to this word 'illegality,' you will have war with the United States."

Expert DR. BONN: I simply wanted to ask the following: If Count Bernstorff has given the dates correctly, the real point is that the *Lusitania* case was revived on the 12th of December; this means that it was made the subject of discussion from the 12th to the 25th of January. Even if that had not been the case, the situation could surely not have become more critical.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I state as a fact that the real crisis which took us in Berlin very much by surprise—and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs will confirm this statement—came at a definitely later date than December.

The CHAIRMAN: Count v. Bernstorff, to what is this crisis of the 25th to be attributed?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That was simply the climax of the negotiations.

The CHAIRMAN: Of what did the resumption of the *Lusitania* case consist?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In the settlement of the *Arabic* matter we had only the settlement of a special case, accomplished for the purpose of getting rid of that particular case. And the only way that we reached that conclusion at that time was that it was found—a fact of which I, in the United States, was ignorant and which was not known in general—that the orders had already been given not to sink passenger steamers. So that, in the case of the *Arabic*, the settlement was brought about on the ground

that the commander of the U-boat had exceeded his instructions. Thus, so far as the *Arabic* was concerned, it constituted no more than the settlement of a single case; the question of the principle was not discussed. But it was always stated that some agreement as to indemnity, or some explanation of some kind must be made in the *Lusitania* matter. That had been postponed, and on the 12th of December Lansing spoke to me about it for the first time, upon which occasion he handed me back a rough draft which I had turned over to him around the close of July or about the beginning of August, a draft which, according to the instructions which I had received from Berlin at that time, had been drawn up by me, the draft of an explanation which we were to give. Of this document I had heard nothing more until up to the 12th of December. On the 12th of December, the Secretary of State said to me: "You gave me this letter at that time. This explanation is not sufficient from our point of view, and I will give you the draft of an explanation which we would accept." Thereupon, I sent that paper to Berlin. Then this draft came back to me. This draft was changed perhaps as many as ten times. Every word of it was telegraphed to and fro from Berlin and Washington, and finally, at the beginning of February, we were entering upon an arrangement which would have been acceptable to the American Government. At that moment, and just before the papers were signed, came the orders for launching the intensive U-boat war, and this arrangement could no longer be carried out at that time. The matter was definitely postponed and I have never heard one word more about the *Lusitania*.

Delegate DR. COHN: On the 12th of December, when Secretary of State Lansing returned the note to you, was the peace proposal already made known to you?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, this was a year before that, in 1915.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: May I ask Count Bernstorff a question? What were the reasons which, in your opinion, led to the crisis arising in the *Lusitania* case?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In my opinion, no crisis of any kind occurred, because the question was one of a deadlock from the very start, since both governments adhered to their stand and the only thing to be done was to draw up some kind of formula which could in some way be adapted to meet the requirements of these insoluble difficulties. We worked for weeks in order to find a form of agreement which would suit both parties, and at the last moment we were still negotiating about this one word "illegal" which the Americans had insisted upon from the very first day. This word had always been inserted in the formula; but we hoped, up to the very last moment, that we would succeed in eliminating it from the announcement.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: And what do you think of the "conjecture,"

if I may say so, which has just been expressed, to the effect that the crisis in the *Lusitania* controversy, or its resumption in the United States, was possibly or even probably brought about in order to avoid the effect of Lansing's letter?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I never took this view, for Lansing's note would never have been acceptable to the American Congress. In such case, the President could have made speeches innumerable; Congress would never have adopted the principle of Lansing's note. For all that we have to do is to realize that Lansing's note means that, from that day on, the Americans would have had no more merchant ships at their disposal. For the fact is that there were no unarmed British ships. So that there would have been no more merchant ships at the disposal of the Americans, and no human being will believe that they would have acceded to this.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I believe that what Count Bernstorff has just told us constitutes a complete vindication of the correctness of my general view of the situation. Lansing made a proposal concerning which Count Bernstorff has just told us that it would never have been accepted by President Wilson; consequently, what was needed was an excuse by virtue of which Lansing's proposal could be eliminated and forgotten. There were only two solutions; either Lansing would have to disappear from public life, or some means would have to be found for saving the country's self respect, and which, at the same time, would provide a possibility for withdrawing Lansing's proposal. And I would like to repeat that, although the negotiations concerning the *Lusitania* had at no time completely slept, the fact is that I did have the impression—I shall be perfectly frank in the matter—that the *Lusitania* case was to be held in abeyance in order that it could be resurrected at the proper moment; and so, at the end of January or—I have found the exact date in the meantime—at the beginning of February, these negotiations entered a very critical phase, in a manner that astonished everybody; a phase so critical that, on the 5th of February, the Wolff Bureau here published an interview of the then Under-Secretary of State Zimmermann with the Berlin correspondent of the Associated Press, in which Zimmermann said, among other things:

He would not conceal the gravity of the situation. Germany would in no case recognize the illegality of the conduct of the U-boat war in the war zone. That the whole crisis was due to the fact that America was now demanding that Germany would recognize the sinking of the *Lusitania* as an act in violation of international law.

That was on the 5th of February. So that precisely during the weeks following Lansing's letter, this new crisis in our relations with the United States came down upon us literally as if it had fallen from the sky. In this crisis, which was literally dragged in by the scruff of the neck, I behold the curtain behind which Lansing's proposal, which would have saved millions

of human lives and which would certainly have caused the war to terminate in 1916, was throttled.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: In any event, you will admit that even though this splendid proposal of Lansing's was, unhappily, allowed to drop, America was justified in her policy regarding armed merchant ships, by the formal principles of the written law, although, it must be admitted, to the detriment of an ideal neutrality.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: And you, Professor, will admit that America stuffed the realm of the written law so full of unneutral acts as to bring it to the bursting point.

The CHAIRMAN: We will close the session at this point. In so far as the international law phase of the inquiry is concerned, I consider it closed.

The session will be continued tomorrow, Saturday, at 10 o'clock.

The session closed at 1:57 o'clock.

TWELFTH SESSION

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1919

The session was opened at 10:25 o'clock, by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: The session is opened.

In the first place, I should like to correct an error which I find has been published in a great portion of the press. According to this error, we are supposed to have announced yesterday that "judgments of members of the committee are, for this reason, not binding upon the committee."

Of course, what should have been stated is: "judgments of persons not members of the committee are, therefore, etc."

In the second place, I find myself obliged to make an announcement concerning the statements which Minister of State Dr. David made yesterday with regard to the attempt on the part of the neutral Power to intervene. In this connection, I desire to state that, in the first place, the proceedings covering this point are only in their initial stages, and are held behind closed doors, that a final conclusion has by no means been reached, and that consequently it is absolutely impossible to form a final judgment along these lines. For the time being only the unsifted material lies before us, and what there is, is limited in scope and fragmentary in form. It is absolutely impossible to form anything in the nature of a complete judgment in this connection. For this reason, I warn the press against drawing any far-reaching conclusions therefrom.

And now coming to the more concise matter of the continuation of the discussion with his Excellency Dr. Helfferich, I reach the reasons which his Excellency Helfferich has communicated to us as to why he changed his attitude with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war. He told us that there were three reasons, so far as he was concerned, which lay at the bottom of this change of attitude: first, individual points connected with the conferences at Pless, concerning which he was informed and according to which, as he stated, he came to realize that no peace could be obtained without further conflict; secondly, the silence of President Wilson, and, thirdly, the message to the Senate of the 22d of January, from which he concluded that it must be construed as indicating the desire to let things go on as they were, if not voicing an actual approval of the conditions of the Entente. I should like to learn more details respecting these individual points; respecting these matters which seem to have been of quite far-reaching significance, so far as his Excellency was concerned. May I ask your Excellency to continue?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The conference which I had with Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg on the evening of January 12 was conclusive, so far as I was concerned. Up to that time, I had not seen Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg since the time of his return from Pless on the forenoon of the 10th of January. Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg handed me, as I entered, the joint note of the Entente sent in reply to our peace proposal, and which had just come in. I have already emphasized the point that this reply alone formed a very material portion of all those reasons which induced me to support the view of launching the unrestricted U-boat war at that time. You gentlemen will remember that I have emphatically stated that I did not consider the unrestricted U-boat war as a situation calling for believing or not believing, but rather as a question of policy and of the conduct of war; and I believe that in this feeling I really am in full agreement with those gentlemen who, at that time, took—let me say—a more or less expectant attitude with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war, whereas today, according to the impression made upon me, they denounce this measure as a very great mistake; so that, working back along the path taken, the impression might be created that, so far as they were concerned, that had always been the case, and that they had always been opponents of the unrestricted U-boat war. Of course, I refer first of all to the gentlemen of the then Progressive National Party. It may serve for me to suggest an example, in order that this analogy may clear up my own attitude to you gentlemen. If Delegate Gothein, who was at that time a member of the Reichstag, and Delegate Struve, whose testimony was taken here as a witness, also at that time a member of the Reichstag, worked to the end that U-boat construction might be hastened, this was certainly not done in order that the U-boats might remain at home; on the other hand, it was undoubtedly done because these gentlemen, too, at least calculated upon the possibility that, at the right time, vigorous use would be made of these U-boats. So I think I may safely assume, in the case of these gentlemen, too, that marked opposition, the impression of which is certainly to be gained today, probably did not exist at that time.

I now come back to the 12th of January, and assert that even the joint answer of the Entente to our peace proposal which—and I repeat this—bolted and barred the door to peace, was one of those reasons which were very materially conclusive so far as I was concerned. For one of the reasons why, on the morning of January 9, when I wrote out the telegram, I did not announce myself as against the U-boat war, was that, up to that time, a formal reply from the Entente to Wilson's peace note had not yet arrived. That situation was changed on the afternoon of the 12th. That is the one point. The second point was the description of the conferences in Pless given me by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg. In my testimony, I have not repeated this description, because Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, as we all

know, has already expressed himself in detail to the committee concerning what occurred in Pless. Yesterday I limited myself to stating that, at that time, on the 12th of January, he related to me the occurrences in Pless in the same manner that he has described them here, though, of course, not in exactly the same words. The gist of this description was that the Supreme High Command of the Army stated that, in their opinion, a continuation of the war, in view of the coming powerful enemy offensives which, as we know, did come, seemed to be impossible; that they could not undertake to be responsible for the further conduct of the operations of war which consisted, primarily, in a successful defense against the offensives, unless every possible means were brought about to relieve our hard-pushed and dangerously menaced western front, means which would cut down to the very greatest possible extent the transportation of reinforcements and ammunition to the enemy.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: May I state something at this point? So far as the ammunition was concerned, was not the war on commerce sufficient to bring this about?

The CHAIRMAN: That is probably a question of a purely military nature.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That is just what I was going to say.

The CHAIRMAN: No one but the military authorities can answer this question for us during the coming sessions.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That is just what I was going to say. But if, in such a situation as this, we were confronted with so categorical an announcement, you will readily concede that, when all was said and done, this assertion was bound to have some influence upon my judgment. Up to that time, we had not heard from the lips of the army leaders any assertion so definite. You have heard that the gentlemen who took part in the conference which occurred on August 31 in Pless, adopted a waiting policy, and, moreover, there is material to be found in the records, and, particularly, in the printed volumes submitted by the Admiralty Staff concerning an interview which, I believe, Captain v. Bülow had with General Ludendorff, which shows—this material was not known up to the present time; I did not receive it until today—that, in the course of this conference, General Ludendorff, too, went into the matter very carefully from both sides. If the gentlemen in question made this statement to the Imperial Chancellor on January 9 in Pless, it was no business of mine to go further into the matter, as was suggested by the question just put by Dr. Sinzheimer, to see whether or not the situation could be cured by the U-boat war on commerce. We were face to face with this announcement; we were confronted by a military dilemma, as I have already stated and as Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg has already remarked. We were on the eve of a terrific offensive—and it came, too; it is true that it was met by a retirement along the straight line of Arras downward toward St. Quentin and the Aisne. In order to

stop this offensive, we gave up the whole of the great Somme region and retired to the Hindenburg line—I assume this to be the case, because, otherwise, it would probably not have been possible to have met the enemy attacks. If, then, the gentlemen of the Supreme High Command of the Army announced to us: “We can not assume the responsibility for further operations on land, for further making good our defense, if we are not immediately and with the utmost promptness provided with every means of relief,” was the Imperial Chancellor and was I, in so far as I had anything to do with the matter, to let things come to the pass of having the military leaders in charge of military operations, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, say to us: “If we are not given those war instrumentalities which we need for the further conduct of the war—if greater value is placed on political measures, the effect of which will not be felt at once, but only after the passage of time, it will be impossible for us to continue”? Just imagine what the result would have been, and you will be able to see how it was that this argument impressed me on the afternoon of the 12th.

Of course, on the 12th of January, the question of “President Wilson’s silence” did not come up, for it was certainly not until the 12th of January itself that the reply was made known to President Wilson.

The CHAIRMAN: There was opportunity up to the 31st.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Now with regard to President Wilson’s silence up to the time of his message to the Senate. What took place in the telegrams of Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office up to that time is not so very clear to me. Viewed from the outside, certainly during the twelve days which succeeded the handing over of the reply of the Entente in Paris, up to the time of the sending of the message to the Senate, no statement by President Wilson was in any way announced which let it be understood that he considered the peace aims of the Entente to be impossible or that he looked upon them in the light of aims which blocked the road to peace.

The CHAIRMAN: Viewed from the outside, your Excellency, certainly. But were you uninformed as to what was going on on the inside in the way of an exchange of telegrams between Bernstorff and the Foreign Office here?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Gentlemen, you must bear in mind how the whole correspondence took place. At that time, I myself had charge of a department which is today subdivided into three great departments and, I believe, a few small subsidiary departments in the bargain. I might state that I carried out the duties of my office during the war with, perhaps, the tenth part of the personnel which is employed today in this field. I was obliged to work day and night and, at the same time, to keep in touch with the Foreign Office and with the Imperial Chancellor—in as close touch as I could possibly keep. But I can not state under oath that I actually was informed of every telegram that was received in the Foreign Office even regarding this important matter. It is true—and for this, I am deeply

indebted to my colleague, the then Secretary of State Zimmermann, and, above all, to the then Imperial Chancellor—that I kept *au courant* with regard to the main features of the foreign policy for the purposes of the work of my own department, and, finally, for the purposes of my cooperation when important decisions were to be made. But I had no right to request that every telegram be presented to me. In such case, there would have been no division of labor. Finally, I was not the person in charge of the general policy, but I was chief of the Department of the Interior and the general representative of the Imperial Chancellor in respect to those matters in which the Imperial Chancellor did not have a special representative—such a representative as he had for foreign affairs in the person of the Secretary of State for the Foreign Office.

The CHAIRMAN: In any event, your opinion is that, on the 12th of January, there was no evidence of any real insistence on the part of Wilson to bring about peace.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I can simply state that my attitude toward Wilson's efforts had already been one of such skepticism that, although I probably heard many remarks made about such endeavors, nevertheless I no longer attributed any particular weight to them. But with regard to these individual points, I am not in a position to say anything definite under oath.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You attributed no particular significance to the telegram of the 9th of January?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I have already stated that, from the very beginning, and in view of the experiences of the first years of the war, I was extremely skeptical with regard to the honest neutrality of Wilson and the American Government. If, in spite of this, I counseled against the U-boat war, it was not because I believed that the neutrality of the United States was a real neutrality, not because I took the view that America had not wittingly done us serious harm—for that is what, in my opinion, America did do—but because, in opposition to the view taken by many others, I expected that the entrance of the United States into the war would increase these injurious effects to an extent which would be very marked, if not fatal. But in any case, my confidence in Wilson had absolutely and unequivocally ceased to exist ever since the affair of the Lansing letter.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: And that was the case as early as the 9th of January, when you sent the telegram?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Certainly, but in so doing—Dr. Sinzheimer, I can not avoid the feeling that the question you asked involves a trap, and I should not like to have any misunderstanding exist on this point—I did not announce myself as against the U-boat war in the telegram of the 9th of January, but expressly stated that it was my request that the decision be postponed until such time as we could have a clearer knowledge of the result of the peace moves.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, the meaning of my question is perfectly clear. It is simply based upon the thought that, on the 9th of January, according to what you stated, you felt toward the United States exactly the way that you felt, or that you stated that you felt, on the 12th of January, when the Imperial Chancellor talked to you as he did. What I mean to say is, that, so far as you were concerned, your attitude toward the United States was not different. That is the purpose of the question; it is no catch question.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: If you want to dissect, Dr. Sinzheimer, I will do some dissecting myself, and do it very minutely, at that. (Merriment.)

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You have the right to do so.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I have emphasized the precise points which were subject to change between the 9th and the 12th of January. The change which occurred consisted, first of all, in the decision made at Pless. I could only get around this fact by sending in my resignation and by making thereby a wholly useless protest against the U-boat war, which, after all, would not have been affected by my resignation. I believe that I explained myself in quite sufficient detail on this point yesterday.

The second new fact was that the Imperial Chancellor showed me on the 12th of January the joint answer of the Entente of the 10th, from which it was plain to me that the Entente, which knew of Wilson's peace move, sent a reply to Mr. Wilson which, had I been Wilson, I would have looked upon as a piece of impudence with reference to one particular point. And that point was this: that the Entente had refused to be placed upon the same ground as the Central Powers by Wilson, who wanted to act as a mediator. In this way, the Entente, quite aside from its impossible war aims which it proceeded to set up, rejected mediation by Wilson with a contemptuous sweep of the hand; for mediation can only occur among equals. That was how I had to interpret the note and, of course, this made its impression on me. As to how Wilson would answer the Entente note of the 10th of January, I, of course, could not know on the 12th.

But affairs did not remain at a standstill on the 12th of January. The next phase of development took the form of Wilson's message to the Senate of the 22d of January, and the valuation to be put upon this is a matter concerning which I have already expressed myself at length. For me, at least, it was the final step, and was the last point necessary to bring me over to the conviction under the influence of which I made my statements here in the Reichstag on the 31st; I might say that it was the psychological basis of that conviction.

The CHAIRMAN: Taken in connection with your personal opinion of Wilson, did not the fact that public opinion in the United States in no way supported the views of Germany influence you very strongly in this connection? You will remember that Count Bernstorff told us in great detail

yesterday that, as a matter of fact, the President could undertake absolutely nothing alone, but that he had to take his stand full and fair behind public opinion. Were these American conditions known to you also at that time, your Excellency, and did they have their effect in bringing you to the point of view which you entertained? I should like to hear what your opinion was with regard to another point, and that is whether Germany was too lax in guiding public opinion in the United States toward a favorable attitude with regard to Germany, and in causing it to maintain such attitude. This feature was touched upon, likewise, in Count Bernstorff's hearing; he testified that he himself, so far as it was in any way possible for him to do so, did what he could, and that the fact of his office imposed certain restrictions upon his activities. My personal opinion is that something more ought to have been done by the German Government along these lines. It ought to have worked along in other ways, making itself felt in the press and in all performances of a public nature, moving-picture shows, theaters, etc., for the reason that the American temperament is such as to allow itself to be influenced to an extraordinary extent by these methods.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The attitude of public opinion in the United States was well known to me, just as was the attitude of the greater part of the business world. I would not be inclined to attribute this to malice. I attribute malice only where I have actual reason to do so. But it is natural that a land like America, a land of Anglo-Saxon civilization, should stand in a relation to another great country of Anglo-Saxon civilization which was our main enemy in this war, different from that in which it stood toward us. And if we add to this the propaganda, the unheard-of propaganda, which was nothing more nor less than a propaganda composed of hideous lies and which had complete room for unrestricted play over there under conditions where we could do nothing in reply, it is perfectly obvious that, for this reason, the feeling there could not be improved. The American Government—of course, I can only give my own impressions—did not do its duty in connection with the abuses of the Entente propaganda in the United States. But on this point, Count Bernstorff and the other gentlemen who were there can give you better information than I. In any event, I know as a fact that not only President Wilson, but the general public opinion in the United States, was prejudiced against us, and it was for this reason that I looked upon the question of the neutrality of the United States continuing to be maintained as all the further from the possibility of accomplishment.

The CHAIRMAN: I recollect that Count Bernstorff stated, in the course of his remarks, that the American Government was more or less forced to look upon these activities of the press and of the moving-pictures, etc., with its hands tied, because it had absolutely no authority to interfere with these private undertakings. Is that correct, Count Bernstorff, or is it not

the case? I should like to ask you to make another brief statement on this point, which seems a very material one.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Up to the time of the *Lusitania*, the disposition of public opinion in the United States was, it is true, not friendly, but it was, at least to a certain extent, neutral.

The CHAIRMAN: The material point, your Excellency, is how the attitude of the American Government came to be what it was. We know that it changed. What we desire to ascertain is the extent to which it was possible for the American Government, with regard to the attitude which was brought about by these private undertakings—I assume that they were private undertakings; I eliminate any suggestion that the American Government could have taken any initiative in the matter—whether or not the possibility existed for the American Government to take steps against these undertakings such as the press, moving-pictures, etc., which were poisoning the attitude of the whole people.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It was impossible for it to take direct official steps. Influence was exercised on various separate occasions by means of conferences with the press, etc., along one line or the other—I mean depending upon the status of diplomatic negotiations. But on the whole, any influence by the American Government would not have been possible at that time. After the United States entered the war, the situation changed completely, because then an official American propaganda bureau was established. But this did not exist before the entrance of the United States into the war.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency did not make any different statement at that time.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: In order to promulgate propaganda, people are needed who are to take charge of the propaganda, and, in this connection, I should like to ask, by means of inquiries directed to Count Bernstorff and, perhaps, also, to Professor Bonn, what the attitude was which the American Government took toward the people who represented the interests of the Entente, and toward those who represented German interests. And I should like to bring up, in this connection, the case of Consul General Bünz, which is interesting and important from still another angle.

The CHAIRMAN: Count Bernstorff, may I ask you to answer this question, which I probably do not need to repeat.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: To take up first of all the question of former Consul General Bünz, the facts were that the Imperial Government and the Hamburg-American Line had an arrangement whereby the Hamburg-American Line was under the obligation of providing coal for our war-ships.

This is what occurred, and, of course, protests against this course were raised by the Entente, with the result that various negotiations took place

between the two governments, and also between the American Government and the governments of the Entente. Former Consul General Bünz, consequently, underwent his penalty, because, in order to provide coal for the war-ships, false declarations had to be given at the port; for it goes without saying, that it was impossible to dispatch ships from New York loaded with coal for our war-ships and, at the same time, to declare that the ships were being used for this purpose. It was, therefore, represented that these ships were, let us say, bound for Lisbon or for some other port. It was on the basis of these false declarations that, later, Consul General Bünz was brought to trial and found guilty.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: May I add a word? Consul General Bünz—I knew him personally—was more than 70 years old when he was put into jail; Germany did her utmost to have him released from imprisonment. These efforts, however, were without success, and Consul General Bünz died in prison. I know of no case where the American Government and the American courts proceeded with the same severity against nationals of the Entente who provided ships of the Entente with rations and ammunition, as they did against a man like Consul General Bünz who did nothing more than to represent German interests.

The CHAIRMAN: Does Count v. Bernstorff know of a case where the American Government proceeded against people of the Entente who had rendered services to their country such as those which Consul General Bünz rendered on behalf of his?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I should not like to put myself in the position of a defender of the American Government; I should merely like to state the fact that an English consul general in San Francisco was also subjected to penalties at that time, on account of a violation of neutrality through recruiting for the British Army. But in reverting to the case of Bünz, I must state that the conviction of the former Consul General did not come about, nor was he imprisoned, until after we had entered the war with the United States. Whether he would have been imprisoned if the United States had been neutral at that time, I can not say. I did not know that any Germans in the United States had been convicted before the entrance of the United States into the war.

The CHAIRMAN: Were criminal proceedings brought only after that time?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, they were brought before that time.

Expert DR. BONN: In this connection, I should like to state that the Bünz case, which we have all very deeply deplored, has, really, nothing to do with the issue. For the Bünz case involved no question of propaganda, but is, at best, a question of neutrality. As to whether anybody got into difficulty with regard to the neutrality laws, or not, has absolutely nothing to do with the question which his Excellency Helfferich put to Count Bernstorff.

The CHAIRMAN: That is true; but the Bünz case has, generally speaking, more or less to do with the general feeling which existed at that time in the United States, upon which it throws quite a definite light.

Expert DR. BONN: I should like to try to clear up two more points which his Excellency Helfferich has touched upon. He has referred repeatedly to the Lansing interview.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That of the 21st of December.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that it would be very useful for Count Bernstorff to tell us what the state of the case was with regard to the Lansing interview, and what happened as the result. It was a matter which came very closely within his own personal experience.

The CHAIRMAN: Count Bernstorff, will you be good enough to reply to Professor Dr. Bonn's suggestion.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It is well known that in the United States, the government officials are obliged to hold interviews with, and give answers to, members of the press to an extent far superseding the practice in other countries. Every day, the official receives some twenty or thirty newspaper men, and is, to a certain extent, subjected to a cross-examination. On the morning following the dispatch of the first Wilson peace note, Lansing was, as a matter of fact, questioned concerning this note to a very close extent by a certain number of newspaper men. On that occasion, he referred especially to that passage which, so far as I recollect, reads more or less like this, that the rights of the United States were being so deeply invaded by the belligerent Powers that there was danger that war might result. He expressed himself somewhat beyond the limits of this utterance, and made use of the phrase that the United States was standing on the verge of war. This utterance got abroad in the country and was published in the evening papers. I can, naturally, not state under oath what followed, but I can only say what the common opinion was at that time in Washington. It was that President Wilson had read this utterance or heard of it, and had at once telephoned to Lansing to come to the White House and had instructed him to retract the statement. Then Lansing had the statement retracted by saying that the words which he used had given a wrong impression, and that this impression should not be allowed to remain. Those are the facts leading up to the matter, so far as I know.

Expert DR. BONN: May I put the further question on this point: What do you think the purpose of Lansing's statement was? Was it not the fact that at that time an immediate and lively attack against Wilson was launched in the press, to the effect that Wilson, to a certain extent, desired to make peace in the capacity of an agent for the German Government? And that Lansing injected the thought into the discussion, which had already been communicated by Gerard, that, if peace were not brought about, the U-boat war would set in?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: At that time, various views had been expressed in the press, and it had also been said on numerous occasions that, if peace were not to come about, then the U-boat war was to be expected. In particular, Ambassador Gerard, when he returned from Germany and before the seal of silence was laid upon him, gave two or three interviews, in which he stated that he was returning from Germany and that he knew that the U-boat war would be declared in the near future. He always expressed himself to this effect. A few days afterwards, his attitude changed. And especially did a newspaper man who traveled along with him, a Mr. Swope, who claimed that he was his confidential man, express himself to this effect. So that, as Professor Bonn just said, the belief was entertained that, if peace was not brought about, the U-boat war would be launched and war with Germany would result. That is correct.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: May I say a word? I have here the text of Lansing's statements of the 21st of December, together with the announcements made in the morning and in the afternoon, as given in the *New York World*. In the morning announcement, Lansing stated in so many words:

America is approaching the verge of war; I mean by this that we are drawing nearer the verge of war ourselves, and therefore we are entitled to know exactly what each belligerent seeks, in order that we may regulate our conduct in the future.

So that this is a full confirmation of what I allowed myself to state yesterday, that is, that America wanted to know the peace proposals of both sides, and would regulate its attitude accordingly. And, under given conditions, if the one or the other of the conflicting parties—and, as matters were at that time, we would be the only ones, in my estimation, who could qualify as such party—did not wish to do what America wanted, America would have entered the war.

In the afternoon announcement, this announcement which was made in the morning was emasculated. It is true that a great hubbub had resulted. I would like to ask Count Bernstorff and Professor Bonn whether anyone believed that the excitement existed because it was thought that the United States was on the verge of war with the Entente, or because the United States was on the verge of war with Germany. The excitement was there; and then Mr. Lansing, in the afternoon, modified his statement and said that America had, up to that time, maintained its neutrality under difficult circumstances and would make further efforts to continue to maintain it. That was the general meaning of his remarks.

The CHAIRMAN: His Excellency Zimmermann desires to make a statement at this time.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I simply wanted to make a remark having a bearing on the propaganda question. So far as I know, to be sure after the outbreak of the war—

The CHAIRMAN: Let me ask you to postpone this question for a moment, so that we may first close with the incident concerning which Count Bernstorff has just spoken.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It goes without saying that no human being believed that the Americans would go to war with the Entente. That is quite self-evident; nobody would have entertained this idea. The danger in the utterance was to be found simply in this, that the President considered it absolutely essential, for the purposes of his peace policy, for the Entente not to believe that the United States would engage in a war with Germany; for he was always convinced that the Entente would only accept mediation in the interests of peace if it were thoroughly convinced that a war between Germany and the United States was out of the question. That is the most important point of the whole question. I have always proceeded from this point of view, since I have always said that the peace mediation could only be brought about and would only have results if the Entente were convinced that the possibility of a German-American war was out of the question.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Yes.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: May I make an announcement on this point? The witness was given the floor in order to give him an opportunity—this is what I assume to be the case, and in accordance with his desire as I understand it—to inform us, in the greatest detail possible, of the reasons why he changed his attitude between the 9th of January and the 31st of January. But it is impossible for me, as recorder, to hold matters within any definite limit of progression, if we are to go into all possible disconnected points which are not germane to this question. A general inquiry to be directed to the witness today was in accordance with the plan of the investigating committee. We made no objection when you were given the opportunity to give the detailed reasons for the change in your point of view, but if we go along this way, it will be quite impossible to carry out the purpose of the investigating committee. I should therefore like to voice the request that, from this time on, the proceedings be so handled as to concentrate upon the question whose answer forms the basis of the inquiries now directed to his Excellency Helfferich, to wit: what were his reasons for changing his stand. That is the inquiry with which we started out.

The CHAIRMAN: I assume, Dr. Sinzheimer, that, by your remarks, you desire to discuss a question of the order of business. It was after full consideration that I put the question as to what public opinion among the American people was at this critical period, because, with this information, I thought I might be able to draw some inference having a bearing upon the point of view which his Excellency Dr. Helfferich had of the whole situation at that time, and which, consequently, might have been of decisive influence upon his view, taken as a whole. For this reason, this issue is directly material to the main issue which we are at present discussing.

Moreover, I would not hesitate, particularly because I am anxious to terminate with Dr. Helfferich's testimony today, to diverge once and a while from the actual main issue, in order to hear from his Excellency Helfferich's lips what appears to me to be of importance in connection with the entire proceedings.

And now his Excellency Zimmermann desires to be heard upon this same point.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Count Bernstorff has just stated that, in his opinion, the American Government would have found it possible, before the breaking off of relations with us and before going to war with us, to influence public opinion by means of propaganda. Now, I believe that my recollection is correct, to the effect that, soon after the outbreak of the war, in October or November, 1914, President Wilson issued a proclamation in which he prohibited anyone from taking an active part in the spreading of propaganda of any kind in favor of either one of the belligerent parties, or from taking sides with either one of the belligerent Powers. He said that America was neutral and desired to remain neutral; that, for this reason, it was forbidden to issue propaganda on behalf of one or the other party. In spite of this proclamation, the pro-English press and the New York press and the press of the eastern States began working up feeling against us in a very lively fashion. All kinds of war atrocities, for which we were supposed to have been to blame, were published broad-cast; hardly ever did anything appear in the press that contained a good word for the Germans. All this took place in spite of the proclamation of President Wilson. Now, I believe that if the American Government had at that time been interested in preserving a real neutrality, it would have found it easy to regulate matters by means of a new proclamation, and remove the sting of the shameless incitation against Germany, which already at that time was generally going on.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now leave this phase. Dr. Cohn desires to put a question to Count v. Bernstorff, concerning the matter of Consul General Bünz.

Delegate DR. COHN: Count v. Bernstorff, do you possibly know at whose suggestion the proceedings against Consul General Bünz were initiated, whether by complaint made to some competent authority, or whether it was the direct act of the American Government?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The accusation was probably made by the District Attorney of the State of New York.

Delegate DR. COHN: Naturally; but he was first bound to determine whether criminal action was justified. Have you any reason for knowing that the American Government itself initiated the proceedings, or, on the contrary, have you, perchance, any reason for believing that the proceeding took the ordinary course, to wit, complaint lodged with a competent author-

ity, and the taking of the proper steps required for the appropriate criminal proceeding?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I should not like to state under oath what steps were taken, because I no longer remember them precisely. I assume, however, that they resulted from proceedings which were instituted by the port authorities at New York.

Delegate DR. COHN: Have you, Dr. Helfferich, any reason for believing that the American Government initiated the proceedings?

The CHAIRMAN: Have you, your Excellency, any reason for believing that the American Government initiated the proceedings?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I have no reason for thinking so. But the Bünz case made a very strong impression on me, not only because Consul General Bünz was personally well known to me, but, above all else, because I had the impression, and knew, that the war-ships of the Entente were continually cruising about in American waters for the purpose of capturing neutral ships which might have been destined to Germany. That was one of the points on which Senator Stone laid emphasis in the complaint which he lodged with Wilson, and these ships were, of course, provided with all conceivable necessities by England—these war-ships of the Entente. Under these conditions, it seemed to me to be a brutal act of injustice to handle the situation which arose by virtue of Consul General Bünz having possibly violated the formal laws of neutrality or ordinances or regulations, in the way that it was handled; whereas, on the other hand, I never heard that the American Government or any American authority took any steps in any direction against the provisioning or the coaling, etc., of English war-ships, or the delivery of war material of every kind to the Entente.

Delegate DR. COHN: Allow me to refer back to the point of departure which Dr. Helfferich has selected. Dr. Helfferich has no reason to believe—I repeat—that the American Government initiated the proceedings against Consul General Bünz. He now says that it seems to him monstrous that the American Government, or any other American authority, objected to the comparatively inconsequential act which Consul Bünz was supposed to have committed. Does Dr. Helfferich expect that the proper American authorities, to whom complaint was made of the violation of an American law which was in full force and effect, are not to prosecute the accused party?

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that this is a question which merely calls for a personal opinion.

Delegate DR. COHN: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. My purpose is to find out, with regard to this particular point, what method there is in Dr. Helfferich's testimony. That is important in this connection. Otherwise, we shall be unable to form any conclusion as to how we are to value the inferences and constructions of Dr. Helfferich. With regard to this one point, I should like to have this definitely fixed; this is of great importance.

The CHAIRMAN: I will leave it to the discretion of Dr. Helfferich to answer.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Dr. Cohn has possibly noticed that I have absolutely refrained from answering him in the course of the proceedings up to this time. I hereby make the request to the Chairman, that I be relieved from the necessity of answering any questions put by Dr. Cohn. (Great commotion and shouts from the audience.)

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I ask leave to speak!

The CHAIRMAN: In other words, this announcement of his Excellency Dr. Helfferich is a refusal to testify in answer to direct questions of Dr. Cohn, is it?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: If I were sitting here before a court, I would object to Dr. Cohn as a judge, and would have the right to do so, under the criminal law.

The CHAIRMAN: With regard to the question of the right to refuse to testify, I may state that, constitutionally, our committee has powers analogous to those of a criminal court. It is stated in so many words, in the constitution, that the committee has powers in the nature of those which characterize criminal procedure. Of course, this does not mean that the character of this committee is definitely that of a court or of a tribunal. That is not the case. The rules of criminal procedure are only applicable so far as pure forms of procedure are concerned, and apply to the way in which the hearings are conducted. But in this sense, we look upon the gentlemen who come here for the purpose of giving information, in the light of witnesses, as the term is used in criminal procedure. I will not decide right here at the moment and in public—I will reserve my own opinion on the point—the question of how far the provisions of the rules of criminal procedure with regard to the right of the witness to refuse to testify, apply. But, although I state in advance that these rules are to be observed by us here, I may also state that the right of refusing to testify is granted to the witness under the rules of criminal procedure only if, as the result of asking a question, either he or his immediate family might be in danger of being criminally prosecuted. The other rules having to do with the right of a witness to refuse to testify can have no application here, because they assume the existence of an accused person with regard to whom the witness occupies a certain position. That can not be the case here. I will therefore ask his Excellency to state whether we are to expect that certain questions coming from a certain member of the Committee, to wit, Dr. Cohn, will not be answered by him, whether it is to this extent only that he will refuse to testify, and not in general, but simply with regard to questions which Dr. Cohn personally puts, in such a way that, if I should put the question, he will not refuse to give his testimony.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Ladies and gentlemen, I should like to take up this question in a manner devoid of any sharp criticism—a question which

is a very serious matter of conscience with me. I should like to assert that this committee is an extraordinary mixture of a court of law and a parliamentary commission. The Chairman himself has recognized the fact that that is the situation which, to a certain extent, confronts the committee. I should further like to remark—and this refers back to statements made by Dr. Cohn on the occasion of my first examination—that I am here, occupying the extraordinary and confused position of witness and accused. Delegate Dr. Cohn has expressly declared that the purpose of the committee's existence here is to determine what crimes the representatives of the old government have committed. That was the sense of his remarks.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The contrary, your Excellency!

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: If I have misunderstood, I should be glad to be corrected.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not believe, your Excellency, that that is the sense of his remarks. For if they had been subject to that unavoidable construction, if that had been their sense beyond any question of doubt, I should at once have taken issue with the statement.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: In that case, I shall be only too glad, as goes without saying, to be corrected on this point. But the fact exists, nevertheless, and quite independent of that statement; for, after all, we really have no desire—to use a trivial expression—to bamboozle each other. This is the way matters stand here: I feel that I am a mixture of a witness and, let us say, one who in the future is to become either an accused or a defendant. That is how I feel; I have not been able to shake off this feeling ever since the first session held by the committee. And I will further state that if I were an accused standing at the bar, and if this were a regular court, then I would have the right to object to Delegate Cohn as a judge.

When I stated, a few minutes ago, that the question of allowing myself to be involved in a controversy with Dr. Cohn in these matters was a pure question of conscience, so far as I am concerned, I do not know whether you gentlemen understood what I mean. My wish would be to avoid going into an explanation on the point, if you would be satisfied with my doing so. If you insist on my going into further explanations on the subject, I am, naturally, at your service and shall avoid, so far as I am concerned, even then, the introduction of further personal rancor into the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall withdraw for the purpose of consulting on this point.

(The committee withdraws at 11:17 o'clock for the purpose of a conference.)

At 12:54 o'clock the hearing was again opened.

The CHAIRMAN: The following resolution has been made by the committee, as the result of a vote of four to two, Delegate Dr. Cohn not voting:

1. The committee is no court of law. Proceedings held by it constitute no proceedings preliminary to proceedings before the national court. It has no judgments to render. The refusal of a member to act, for personal reasons, is not permissible; nor is the refusal to answer questions put by an individual member. A refusal to answer a question is available to a witness only for the reason applicable to criminal process.

Are you now prepared, your Excellency, after I have read this resolution, to answer Delegate Dr. Cohn's question?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The resolution has, in no way, affected the reasons which impel me. For that reason, I am no more ready now than I was before to answer questions which Delegate Dr. Cohn may put.

(Call from the audience: Now for the resolution.)

The CHAIRMAN: In this case, the committee has reached a resolution again, by the same vote of four to two, Delegate Cohn not voting:

Witness Dr. Helfferich, in view of the fact that he has refused to testify without lawful cause, will, in accordance with Paragraph 69 of the criminal procedure, be charged with the costs caused by his refusal to testify, and ordered, at the same time, to pay a fine of 300 marks.

(Commotion and laughter.)

I have a personal remark to make. The penal resolution is not in accordance with my view of the meaning of the purposes which, according to the constitution, are to control us. I am of the opinion that, so far as our proceedings are concerned, the analogy to criminal process can not be stretched to the point of completely ignoring personal reasons which may be such as to cause anyone to decide to refuse to testify. I further consider it of the greatest importance that, before adopting such a resolution, the personal reasons which induced Dr. Helfferich to refuse to testify should first be given, in order that their weight might be considered, in order that the reasons of his refusal could be gone into. The refusal to accept my view is, in my opinion, of such importance and so vital that I herewith resign from the chairmanship of this committee. (Rousing cheers.)

I resign the chairmanship in favor of Acting Chairman Mr. Gothein.

(Delegate Gothein takes the chair.)

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN (with raised voice): I must, first of all, subject to the sharpest censure those representatives of the press who have given vent to expressions of approval. I shall take away the cards from all those parties who venture once more to express approval in any way whatsoever.

And at the same time, I call attention to the fact that, if there once again occurs any expression of approval or disapproval from the audience, I shall order the hall cleared. I beg that you will conduct yourselves accordingly.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: May I ask a question of the Chairman?

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: For the moment, I still have the floor. One minute, your Excellency!

I still have to inform you that, since your Excellency has stated previously that you were ready to give the reasons which were such as to impel you not to answer the questions put by Delegate Dr. Cohn, at the express desire of Delegate Dr. Cohn you are requested to give those reasons here in public session. I call your attention to the fact, however, that the only thing to be dealt with in this connection are facts, and not opinions. If you please!

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: May I venture, first of all, to ask the Chairman a question?

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: If you please.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: What right of appeal have I, analogous to those afforded by the criminal process, against the resolution of this committee?

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: On that point, the committee has drawn up no resolution. I leave it to your discretion to inform yourself as to what your legal rights are, or to submit your complaint to the joint committee.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I state that there is no legal remedy provided, analogous to that peculiar to the criminal process, and that this fact is obvious to the members of the committee.

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: I can only state that you are in no position here to make any assertions in this regard, but that these assertions are to be made by the committee.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Mr. Chairman, under these conditions, which affect me so closely, I am entitled to be heard here. I insist upon that right.

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: You have nothing to establish with regard to this question; the committee alone can do so. You have not this right.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I have asked the committee what legal remedies I have, according to the opinion of the committee, against the resolution which the committee has taken, and must announce here that, in reply to the question, I have received no answer from the committee.

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: I have answered you in saying that you can present your complaint to the Joint Committee of Inquiry.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: In so far as concerns the second question, I have called attention to the fact that I have asked to be spared from giving the exact grounds for my action, in order to avoid unnecessary personal asperity. I assumed that Mr. Cohn is sufficiently aware of what those grounds are, as is the committee itself. I have stated that we are now, at this point, dealing with a matter which is a serious matter of conscience with me. But since Mr. Cohn himself, and the committee also, insist that the reasons be given, I will do so.

This committee and, in fact, the Joint Committee, is, above all, engaged in the task of getting at the reasons which led to the terrible collapse of our

country. In my opinion, Delegate Dr. Cohn took a very direct part in this collapse. According to a telegram from Mr. Joffe which was published in the press at that time, Mr. Joffe, being the Berlin representative of the Russian soviet government, Dr. Cohn had Mr. Joffe put money belonging to the Russian soviet government at his disposal for the purpose of bringing about a revolution in Germany at the time when our country was making its hardest fight against the overwhelming numbers of its enemies. Those are the reasons why I must refuse to talk with Dr. Cohn about these things and to give answer to his questions. It is, of course, obvious that you could subject me to the penal measures of criminal process, but no power on earth can force me to exchange questions and answers with Dr. Cohn.

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: Dr. Cohn, do you wish to speak?

Delegate DR. COHN: Yes, I desire to be heard on this point. I appeal to the committee, and I also appeal to Dr. Helfferich, although he refuses to answer my questions. What Dr. Helfferich has brought up here is, as a matter of fact, incorrect. It has already repeatedly been settled, so far as the public is concerned, and this constitutes another proof of the carelessness with which Dr. Helfferich deals with facts, when he again makes use of a circumstance which has long since been found to be untrue, in order to find a basis for his attitude in a serious question of law and policy.

It is not true that Ambassador Joffe ever stated in a telegram that he gave me money at a time when the Fatherland was struggling at the front. In the telegram referred to by Dr. Helfferich, Mr. Joffe merely said one thing, which I confirmed later in public statements made to the press and in the National Assembly on February 27, 1919, namely, that on the morning of November 6, 1918, he gave me certain sums of money to be used for certain purposes, concerning which I made a detailed statement in the National Assembly and in the course of those other public addresses.

Those purposes had nothing in common with what Dr. Helfferich states they had; they simply had to do with the maintenance of Russian prisoners and with sufferers in Germany, and, to a small extent, with the furtherance of the political aims of my party. It should certainly be clear to Dr. Helfferich that, from the 6th of November, 1918, on, even if I had at once used these sums for the purposes of my political aims, it would have been impossible for me to bring about results by means of the press, by means of public meetings, or by other political measures which could in any way have been felt, so far as conditions at the front were concerned.

But, speaking of the major portion of the money, namely, the money which was used for the maintenance of Russian prisoners and those in want, even Dr. Helfferich will not go as far as to assert that the maintenance of the prisoners and of those in want had for its purpose or was in any way whatsoever adapted to increase the difficulties of the troops which were struggling at the front.

Dr. Helfferich, as a voracious reader of political news, and in view of the fact, moreover, that he has eagerly followed the course of political events, has certainly read the stenographic report of the session of the National Assembly of February 27, 1919. If he has not read it, it constitutes a serious imputation against his reliability in estimating facts and in the interpretation of statements made. In concluding the analysis made by me in the course of addressing the National Assembly, I spoke as follows:

I do not delude myself with the hope, honorable members of the Assembly, that even now the gossip about the Russian millions will be stilled. I can only say one thing: That whoever, after this, shall make his appearance in this hall and give vent to such gossip, in hidden or less concealed form, whether he occupies the government bench or whether he is a delegate, is, I must confess, a liar.

Dr. Helfferich escapes characterization along the lines of these remarks, because we are not in the hall where I spoke these words, and because Dr. Helfferich is neither a delegate of the National Assembly nor a member of the Government.

I may not, however, pass over these matters without pointing out the real purpose of Dr. Helfferich's remarks as they appear to me to be. In stating that he did not know to what extent he was a witness or to what extent an accused, Dr. Helfferich is right in one thing: Although not formally, and in the meaning of a legal proceeding, before the national court, and much less within the meaning of criminal procedure under the criminal code, it is, nevertheless, true that Dr. Helfferich stands here, as a matter of fact, as I understand his position, as an accused before the bar of this investigating committee.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Thanks!

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: Colleague Cohn, I can not concede that this statement is permissible. The province of the investigating committee is limited to investigation, and not to making accusations. I must subject this statement of yours to censure as being in conflict with the tasks and duties of the investigating committee.

Delegate DR. COHN: I submit to this reproof, and will make no further remarks which have any bearing upon the powers of the investigating committee. But I may, at least, call Dr. Helfferich's attention to an event which took place, not before the investigating committee, but in the old Reichstag, between him and me. As far back as May, 1917, Dr. Helfferich saw fit to reproach me bitterly for a speech which I made at that time in the Reichstag, saying that I had alleged guilt or even complicity of the German authorities with regard to the outbreak of the war. Thereupon, I answered Dr. Helfferich that, so far as the blame was concerned—

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: Colleague Cohn, I merely gave State Secretary Dr. Helfferich the opportunity to reply, in order to give the reason for

his refusal to answer, and I only gave you the opportunity to reply, for the purpose of meeting the reasons which were assigned. In my opinion, your answer regarding the last point mentioned has nothing to do with what Dr. Helfferich has stated here.

Delegate DR. COHN: Mr. Chairman, I regret that I can not submit, so far as this point is concerned, and I regret to be obliged to contradict you. Dr. Helfferich has said that Delegate Dr. Cohn was directly and, perhaps, primarily a participant in the collapse; he has accused him of being a guilty party. And to meet this point, those statements which I had in mind, and which, moreover, are very brief, should be sufficient. In view of this explanation, I may venture to continue. I say that, at that time, in May, 1917, Dr. Helfferich charged me with having placed the blame, or part of the blame for the war, with the German authorities—

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: May I ask, Mr. Chairman, what kind of a discussion we are coming to now?

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: You are not speaking now; Dr. Cohn has the floor for the present.

Delegate DR. COHN: I thereupon replied to Dr. Helfferich—

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Mr. Chairman, I am here as a witness, for the purpose of having my statement taken.

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: Certainly you are here as a witness. Your business is to answer questions when they are put to you.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I am simply here in the capacity of a witness. If the discussion proceeds along these lines, I shall leave the hall.

(The witness arises.)

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: Then we shall take the necessary steps to prevent you.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I repeat that, if the discussion proceeds along these lines, and if I am given no information as to the character of the discussion, I shall leave the hall.

(The witness packs his records and his portfolios.)

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: You have not been given the floor.

Delegate DR. COHN: Then I may add one thing—for Dr. Helfferich is again granting us the honor of his presence! It is not I who am the party to blame for the collapse, but one of the parties guilty of conducting and prolonging the war is Dr. Helfferich.

Acting Chairman GOTHEIN: Once again, that does not come within the limits of the purposes of the committee; I must reprove you, in the most unqualified manner, for having given vent to this utterance.

I now close the discussion, and shall fix the date of the next session at my discretion.

The session closed at 1:12 o'clock.

THIRTEENTH SESSION

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1919

The session was opened by Chairman Delegate Gothein at 10:33 o'clock.

The CHAIRMAN: I open the session.

The occurrences which took place at the close of the last public session have given rise to doubt in the minds of the public, as well as in the minds of those participating in the proceedings, with regard to the purposes of the investigating committee.

In answer to the doubts entertained, and basing my remarks on the resolution which was unanimously taken and which remains unshaken, I reiterate that, as was announced without objection at the 84th session of the National Assembly, the investigating committee has merely the character of a parliamentary commission of inquiry; it does not take the place of any proceeding preliminary to proceedings before the national court or a criminal action. Its purpose is not to gather together material which can serve as a basis of a legal action, but the explanation and establishment of facts, causes, and chains of political events.

This resolution is unconditionally binding upon all members of the committee, as it is on all witnesses, who, in the course of their statements, are under the obligation of refraining from all personal judgments.

So that, on the one hand, I request members of the committee and, on the other hand, the witnesses, to base their actions upon the provisions of this resolution.

First of all, we shall hear his Excellency Helfferich:

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I request permission to make a statement¹ which has a bearing upon the judgment imposed upon me on the ground of a supposed refusal to testify, and also upon the ground of my refusing to take part in question and answer as regards Delegate Dr. Cohn, and which also has to do with the answer which Delegate Dr. Cohn made to me, as well as with individual questions which have arisen as the result of the general course of procedure followed by this committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, I do not consider that it is appropriate to permit you to take this matter up at this stage. I shall, however, leave it to your discretion to present the committee with this protest, for that is what it seems to be, if I have correctly understood you. The committee will take cognizance thereof and will, moreover, have it published in its protocol, and will inform you of its decision in the matter. If the committee

¹ See Annex to this meeting, *post*, p. 846.

considers it proper to inform you of its decision in open session, in which case this protest will be read, this will take place in the course of the next session. We shall take action upon it today. In the meantime, it will be permissible for you to inform the press of the contents of your protest beforehand.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I personally would be inclined to consider it of the greatest importance to be allowed to present this protest immediately at the commencement of today's proceedings, and, in like manner, to be allowed to take up the other points of which I have spoken, in oral discussion. Merely in order to refrain from placing any obstacle in the way of the smooth course of the proceedings of this committee—any obstacle which it is possible for us to avoid—I yield to the desire of the Chairman and submit my protest and my statement for purposes of publication in the protocol. I must, however, point to the importance of having my statement made public forthwith, and shall take the hint which the Chairman has given me. I shall see to it that my statement is made known to the press forthwith. May I hand over my statement?

(Hands over his statement.)

Now, may I add another word? The statement which I have delivered brings up questions which are of fundamental importance for the whole method of procedure, not only of the subcommittee, and not only of the main committee, but for the procedure to be followed in all future parliamentary investigating committees. For this reason, if for no other, I could not expect, and I do not expect that these questions will be decided by this subcommittee at this moment, since it will undoubtedly need to go into the questions with the main committee and confer about them in detail.

I have already stated that, in opposition to the statements made in the press, it is not my desire to put any obstacles in the path of this committee. I have the very greatest personal interest in seeing that the business before this committee comes to a prompt and uninterrupted termination. For this reason, and with the reservations which I have ventured to make and which are drawn up in my statement, I am at the disposal of the committee for the purpose of further inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN: In the first place, his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg has asked to speak, in order to answer an inquiry which was made by Minister of State Dr. David on the occasion of an earlier session, an explanation concerning the events which took place in the secret session of the committee, stating why it was that we were not informed by the Imperial Government of all the negotiations which were going on with the United States. I consider it expedient to take Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg's testimony before that of Dr. Helfferich.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Ladies and gentlemen, in full accord with the basic principles of these proceedings, which today have

again been announced by the Chairman as being in entire agreement with the constitution, the former Chairman of the committee again and again announced his objection to the proposition that decisions based upon the proceedings of the investigating committee be reached before the investigating committee had come to the end of its task; and particularly did the Chairman instruct the press to refrain from the expression of opinions based upon what has occurred in the constitutional committee up to this time. In many instances, these warnings fell upon unfruitful soil.

I may be permitted, on my part, too, to express my regret that this is so. I hope that the committee has come to the conviction, as the result of everything that I have said up to this time, that, far from being moved by any political feeling, I have merely attempted to serve the truth in my representation of the facts. I proceed upon the conviction that, particularly since we are struggling in the toils of such an unspeakable misfortune, the people have a just claim to know the course of events. And I am not at all inclined to a policy of mystification with regard to any phase; in fact, the contrary is the case. But if it is the task of this committee to establish the truth not only in the historical sense, but for the purpose of preventing the people, who are now called upon to bear this misfortune and this want, from being continually provided with information which is not such as to remove the doubts which have existed up to this time concerning the most important questions, but, on the contrary, results in their multiplication, then I believe that it is my right, even in the absence of special questions being put to me by the committee, to clear up the matters at issue to the best of my ability. Early this morning, I read an article in the *Vorwärts*, which represents as settled facts which are at the present time still in the process of investigation before us and which draws inferences therefrom which are bound to lead to further confusion. In the main, it deals with the charge—speaking in rather severe terms—of having deceived the people, charges which have been heard in this hall too.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, that a peace mediation on the part of Wilson was to be expected, was a fact which was in the air in the autumn of 1916. I was bound to have reasons for not informing the party leaders, in detail and officially, with regard to the steps which we had taken in Washington in respect to a peace move on the part of Wilson, not, however, for the purpose of deceiving the people, but, on the contrary, for the purpose of not blocking Wilson's peace move from the very start. For it was obvious that, if even the slightest whisper of our move had seeped through, it could no longer be considered a thinkable possibility for Wilson to accomplish anything in the interests of peace. In view of the general attitude of the United States toward the Entente, there was nothing which could redound more to the discredit of its President than the charge of doing us a favor. But the situation in Germany, too, made it absolutely impossible for me to take the

political parties completely into my confidence. I remember clearly that, on the occasion of a confidential conference which I had with the party leaders on the 11th of December, 1916, there was expressed the very definite disinclination on the part of the majority to having peace brought about by President Wilson. The animosity against America which has repeatedly been discussed in the present proceedings, was confessedly too strong; even communications of an absolutely confidential nature would not have protected me from discussions in the press, which would have condemned every move in the nature of mediation which America might have taken, as opposed to the interests of the nation. The Social Democrats, however, who took the opposite view, constituted no more, after all, than a minority party whose agreement, as matters then lay with us at that time in Germany, would simply have increased the opposition of the other parties. By President Wilson's note of the 18th of December, his peace move constituted public law to just such an extent as did the attitude of the Entente to the peace question by virtue of their answer to this note and to our peace proposal. That the U-boat resolution of the 9th of January was taken without the knowledge of the Reichstag, was the necessary result of the character of this resolution, viewed as a decision concerning a military move. In order to protect this development as much as could possibly be done, it was necessary to keep it as much of a secret from all the world as it lay in the power of the competent authorities to do. Attacks against this secret method of proceeding could only be based upon the argument that the responsible parties were plainly wrong in assuming that they were confronted by that political and military dilemma of which I have repeatedly spoken; in other words, and coming down to my particular office, that I was obviously wrong in my conclusion of the 9th of January, that the Entente was not ready to negotiate. This subject has been commented upon so repeatedly and in such detail, that I have nothing further to add concerning it today. And, moreover, I also have made a detailed statement as to why it was that I thought that no event which occurred in the subsequent period reaching up to and including the 22d of January, namely, the day of the message to the Senate, was such as to justify me in drawing the conclusion that any real change in the situation could come about. As soon as it was possible, I informed the political parties of the occurrences which were connected with Count Bernstorff's telegram of the 28th of January.

Summing up the entire matter, we find that the fact that we kept secret the steps that we had taken in Washington, simply resulted in furthering Wilson's peace move, and that the result of keeping the U-boat resolution secret was no more nor less than to keep this instrumentality of warfare protected from injuries of a military nature. That the political parties of the Empire were at that time in any doubt upon the point that the U-boat war would involve us in a war with the United States, is a fable. If the

committee has any doubt on this point, I suggest that the stenographic reports of the sessions of the budget committee, which took up the matter of the U-boat war in its varying phases, be consulted. In spite of its knowledge that this was what the U-boat war meant, so far as America was concerned, a solid majority of the Reichstag supported the U-boat war, conditioning its support on the fact that the war was held to be an essential step by the Supreme High Command of the Army. This fact can not be questioned, in my opinion, particularly by those political parties who emphatically support the principle that the majority of the people should decide the course which matters are to pursue.

The CHAIRMAN: We have taken cognizance of this announcement. Your Excellency has stated that it would be desirable to refer to the stenographic protocol of the sessions of the budget committee held on this subject.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The way that I put it was this: That these stenographic reports be consulted if the committee should still entertain any doubts.

The CHAIRMAN: I consider it absolutely essential for these reports to be consulted. They will certainly help to solve a material portion of the task of the investigating committee. I should like, however, to call attention to the fact that, strictly speaking, these reports are not stenographic reports. Of course, they are stenographic reports in the fullest sense of the term, so far as the speeches which were made at that time by the Imperial Chancellor, his representatives, and the secretaries of state are concerned. With regard to the statements made by the members of the committee, they are, however, merely protocols drawn up on the basis of stenographic notes which were taken. For this reason, it will be necessary, in my opinion, that members of the Reichstag, that is, of the budget committee who participated in those conferences, be heard here as witnesses, in order that the matter be still further explained.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: May I venture, perhaps, to make another proposal?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should like to leave it to the eventual discretion of the committee, in case the committee should deem it necessary to do so, to question the party leaders, too, with whom I had repeated confidential conferences on the point, as to whether it is not the fact that I based my objections to the U-boat war in all its phases, on those occasions when I took sharp issue with the U-boat war, not only on my view that the number of our U-boats was too small, but upon the very point that the U-boat war would involve us in a war with the United States and that it was my desire to avoid, under all circumstances, adding to the number of our enemies.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, this circumstance is also shown in the

records of the budget committee. In this connection, I should like to state, however, that the records of the budget committee also show that not only did the Social Democratic Party constitute no opponent to a peace mediation by Wilson, but that the same was true of the Progressive National Party. As a matter of fact, this is shown by the records of the budget committee.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: On this point, I may state that I do not believe that I have said here anything to the contrary. I stated that a solid majority of the Reichstag took sides in favor of the U-boat war, on the condition that the Supreme High Command of the Army was in favor of the war. This solid majority of the Reichstag consisted of the Right, the Center and the National Liberals. I received the impression during the war that the members of the Progressive National Party took no really definite attitude on this precise question of the U-boat war. However, I draw no inferences from this fact. I might draw the single political inference that, in view of the majority situation in the Reichstag at that time, my reliance upon the Social Democrats and the Progressive Nationalists to support my policy, pitted against the majority held by the other parties, might well have led to disastrous political results.

The CHAIRMAN: I simply made this remark, your Excellency, because, in continuing the statement which you have just quoted, you stated that you were hardly able to depend for support upon the Social Democrats and, for this reason, I thought it proper to announce here, right at this point, what the records of the budget committee say on the subject.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: It supplements what I said.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, and I may put the question to his Excellency Helfferich too: It is undoubtedly the fact that, at that time, a majority was in favor of the unrestricted U-boat war, and that his Excellency Bethmann and his Excellency Helfferich were decided opponents of the view expressed by this majority. Is an inference not bound to be drawn, in consequence? If those who hold the opinion that the unrestricted U-boat war constituted a peril for the entire people, refrained from taking the necessary steps according to the principles of parliamentary governments which we were just discussing, would this not result in a strengthening of the attitude of the majority, in that it could avail itself of the argument that, perhaps, after all, the matter was not so decisive? May I request an answer to this question?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I stated in unmistakable terms on the occasion of my first remarks the significance I was called upon to attribute to this lay-out of the parliamentary field, in view of the general political conditions in the German Empire in their relation to the two supreme branches of government. Although it is true that at that time we were not a nation governed by popular representation, but a State subject to supreme authority such as is now being discussed, I believe that, nevertheless, it is a

mistake to undervalue the significance of the parliamentary conditions, even when a state subject to supreme authority is considered. It is possible that this significance is even greater than it is in a state governed by popular representation. I would prefer not to go any deeper into the subject at this time, but, nevertheless, I may call attention to the fact that even the statesman of heroic mould, Bismarck, had to take the conditions of the political parties of parliament into consideration, although when he was in power, our nation was a state subject to supreme authority to a far greater extent than was the case when I was Imperial Chancellor. And we must remember how Prince Bismarck had to give up the pursuit of policies which he considered absolutely essential to the welfare of the Empire, on account of these political conditions of parliament. During the war, I myself was destined to learn this much by experience, that the attitude of the majority parties in the Reichstag had a very definite influence upon the most important phases of the development of the war. I believe that I must make this statement and that I am able to make it.

The CHAIRMAN: I should not like to go into this matter any more deeply today. I think it will be expedient for us to eliminate it during the course of the further hearings, to the greatest extent possible, because, after all, it takes us off into other fields and, for the moment, constitutes a hindrance to the progress of our hearings.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: Gentlemen, I will venture to make but a short statement. The remarks of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg are to the following effect: He states that parliament is, in part, jointly responsible for the fact that we went to war with the United States as the result of the U-boat war, and that, indeed, it was largely responsible therefor; for, according to his statement, parliament was formally also an element of force strong enough, even, given the proper conditions, to oppose such a resolve on the part of the Supreme High Command of the Army or to postpone it. The Imperial Chancellor takes the stand that the Reichstag was fully informed as to the consequences which must needs result in the United States from the launching of the U-boat war. I can not share this view. I am convinced that if the Reichstag had really known the situation as it was revealed by the exchange of telegrams between Washington and Berlin, it would have put the entire weight of its influence in the scale in order to revoke the fatal decision. I infer that this is the case, in the first place, because the express and definite announcements of our Ambassador that war with the United States would be unavoidable if the decision to launch the unrestricted U-boat war was taken, were not communicated to us. When later, in the course of the summer of 1917, this view which our Ambassador had taken, together with his communications, leaked through to parliament, they attracted the greatest attention and played a very material part in bringing about the trend which domestic politics took during the summer,

and which Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg has deplored in his recent statements. For these reasons, I am bound to adhere to my view that full information was not given parliament.

Imperial Chancellor DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: May I reply—

The CHAIRMAN: I should just like to call attention to one point. Your Excellency has explained the reasons why you did not inform either the budget committee or the party leaders of the individual steps that were taken. In my opinion, it follows that we would only be able to take up this question to further advantage if we were to call for the protocols of the budget committee and, at the same time, take the testimony of those who were the party leaders at that time. In my opinion, it would be of very little advantage to go into these matters any further at the present time. But I will give your Excellency the opportunity to speak once more on the point.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I can simply voice my agreement with the statements made by the Chairman. It was my intention to make a similar statement.

I differ with Minister of State David, since I take the view that the party leaders and the general public, I might add—I believe that an examination of the various articles in the newspapers would confirm this—entertained no doubt whatsoever, in view of all the precedents afforded by the *Sussex* note, etc., that the unrestricted U-boat war would necessarily involve us in war with the United States. That was surely a secret which was open to all the world.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: In the latest number of the *Deutsche Revue*, there is a statement of the events which took place in the Bundesrat committee for foreign affairs at the session of the 16th of January, 1917. The article goes into details; I do not know whether the Imperial Chancellor knows the article. If he has not seen it, I should like to ask him to tell us how the votes went on that occasion.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: On this point, I can tell you nothing; I have nothing before me in the shape of a protocol concerning this session of the Bundesrat. Moreover, no protocol would be drawn up, giving a statement of how the votes were cast in the Bundesrat. As a matter of fact, there was no vote taken in the Bundesrat; but when I told the Bundesrat of the decision which had taken place on January 9, the various members of the Bundesrat expressed their views with regard to the expediency of this resolve.

The CHAIRMAN: Let us hear his Excellency Helfferich on this point alone.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: With regard to this point, now: I have a very distinct recollection of the session of the Bundesrat committee that dealt with the U-boat war. The then Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg is absolutely right; to my knowledge, the session was not covered by pro-

to col. The conference was absolutely confidential; it was an occasion on which opinions were confidentially exchanged. Baron v. Weizsäcker, the Premier of Württemberg was the only one who took a view opposed to the unrestricted U-boat war and voiced his objections. Not Bavaria! Count Hertling did not, it is true, speak in favor of the unrestricted U-boat war with the same firmness as the other representatives did; he was somewhat skeptical, and possibly may have brought up this objection or that; but the Premier of Bavaria did not take any stand against the unrestricted U-boat war. The only person to take a definite stand against, and to state his objections with great emphasis, was Baron v. Weizsäcker, the Premier of Württemberg.

May I now answer, in connection herewith, the question which Dr. Sinzheimer put to me too?

Delegate DR. SPAHN: The question of the vote.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: No voting was done.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: It has been stated, with regard to Weizsäcker, that, as the result of his opposition, consent was not given.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That is a mistake.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: May I say a word, please? According to our state constitution, the Bundesrat committee for foreign affairs had no right to make resolutions, anyway. For this reason, a vote, as such, was out of the question. The chairman of the Bundesrat committee, the Bavarian representative on the Bundesrat committee, was given the task of drawing up a general *résumé* of the remarks which had been made. But in view of the fact that there was no question of passing any resolution, no real vote could be taken in any sense of the word.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I can simply confirm this. The question was not put to a real vote. I have not the *Deutsche Revue* here before me. I have read Baron v. Weizsäcker's presentation of the matter, too, but my memory of the passage differs from that of his Excellency Spahn. But we could settle this by sending for the particular number of the *Deutsche Revue*.

Now with regard to the other point, the question put by Dr. Sinzheimer. I ask to be allowed to give a precise statement of the stand which I finally took during those dark days. After the rejection of our peace proposal, which resulted in the failure of the then peace move, the unrestricted U-boat war came to be, even in my opinion, an absolutely inevitable necessity after all, though, indeed, a very grave one; it had to be launched either with the support of the parliamentary majority or without it; it was launched with the support of the parliamentary majority. There can be no doubt whatsoever about this, and, above all can no such doubt exist in view of the fact that the Center party made a statement, in connection with the October conferences, a statement to which Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg has referred today, that the Imperial Chancellor would have the backing of the Reichs-

tag in advance, if the Supreme High Command of the Army desired the U-boat war—desired that the U-boat war be launched. So, speaking from the purely parliamentary standpoint, there could be absolutely no doubt that, by virtue of the fact that the Center party turned the scales, the Reichstag had given the Imperial Chancellor full powers in blank for conducting the U-boat war. By virtue of this fact, in my opinion, no national court in the world could, in any way, condemn the government which had launched the U-boat war, or could even go so far as to censure such government on the theory that it had acted against the will of the parliament.

Thus it was that the U-boat war was not launched against the will, but with the consent of parliament. The only question is, whether this attitude on the part of the parliament resulted from misleading statements having been made to the parliament, or from the fact that important information was withheld from it. To my personal knowledge, neither one of these things occurred. With special regard to the question of the entrance of the United States into the war—ladies and gentlemen, I believe that I do not exaggerate when I say that not only once, but a dozen times, was my conviction personally announced by me in the most definite manner, to wit, that the unrestricted U-boat war would bring us into war with the United States. I stated that fact even more forcibly—it seemed necessary for me to do so right at that October period—more forcibly, perhaps, than my secret convictions warranted. At that time, I could always see just a glimmer of hope in the background, that if a peace mediation were to fail by reason of its rejection by the Entente, perhaps a change in the attitude of the United States would ensue. But in the Reichstag and in the budget committee, this danger was always very specially emphasized by me—always with the greatest assurance and definiteness—and the same is true with regard to Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, to wit, the fact that the unrestricted U-boat war would lead to war with the United States. Whosoever was not perfectly clear on that point, ladies and gentlemen, may be eliminated from consideration as a political factor. (Very true.)

The CHAIRMAN: There is no doubt whatsoever on that point, for it is to be found, too, in the records of the budget committee.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Then it is certain that, at least as regards the United States as a source of danger, the Reichstag—to make use of this expression—was not misled. Those dangers which were bound to come with the entrance of the United States into the war—I would just like to ask here: Where is the man who painted them in more startling colors or described them more plainly than I? I remember that I stated to the budget committee here in this very hall, at a time when—I have recently referred to this—people were beginning to get impatient because I constantly insisted: "Gentlemen, what we want to do is to see clearly; and if the U-boat war is launched some fine day"—I was including in my reckoning

that it was quite possible that it might finally be launched—"and if it fails, then there will at least be nobody here to say: 'Yes, but if they had only told us this and that!'" And now this situation has come upon us. In spite of the fact that we announced the existing dangers so plainly and emphasized them so strongly, there are people who at this time—people who, to my amazement, were present at that time—who state today that we did not give them a clear view of the situation at that time.

The question of Wilson's efforts in the direction of peace brings up an incident which was less directly connected with my department at that time.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, let me interrupt you with another question. You are just starting off on another line of thought. Every word that you have just spoken stands confirmed in the records as it is. According to the records there can be no doubt that you always took the standpoint at that time that the unrestricted U-boat war would lead to war with the United States; and it was at that time, precisely, that you made use of the most decisive expression of all: "It is our last card; if it does not turn up trumps, then Germany is lost for centuries." That is what you announced to this majority at that time. But the question which I wanted to ask you, and in which I am concerned, is the following: You knew that the unrestricted U-boat war would bring the greatest neutral Power over to the side of the Entente. And now I ask you—I am not putting this question in the form of an accusation; I beg that you will not misunderstand me: Under these circumstances, were you not called upon to state, in order to bring to its highest pitch the sense of responsibility of this majority, against which you had taken your stand with such energy: "I shall never assume the responsibility for the decisions of this majority"? That is the question.

The CHAIRMAN: If you please.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I believe that that question will lead us somewhat from the beaten path. I shall take the liberty of coming back to it. But perhaps the Chairman will permit me to finish, for the present, with my line of thought which relates to the original question.

We are discussing the point as to whether the Reichstag was misled or whether it was not. I believe that the question is of such importance that it must be definitely answered at the present time, in so far as I am concerned. The Reichstag was not misled with regard to the facts: First, the fact that the U-boat war would most probably bring the United States into the war; secondly, in connection with the great dangers which would encompass us if the United States should enter the war. On this point, it is the view of Dr. Sinzheimer, too, the recorder, that the records show this beyond any question.

The third point which belongs here too—and, for this reason, I ask for permission to be allowed to cover this point also—was whether or not the

Reichstag was fully informed concerning Wilson's peace efforts; and in this connection, so far as I am concerned, I can but join in the statements made by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, having lived through these experiences together with him, in saying that Wilson's peace move was made a matter of public law on the 21st of December. What had gone before was no longer of real significance. If the Reichstag had not been kept informed as to the facts leading up to this event, let me ask you, ladies and gentlemen, to picture to yourselves what we could possibly have said to the Reichstag at that time. If we were to tell the whole truth, we would have had to say to the Reichstag: "The first time this peace proposition came up was in April and, in fact, at Wilson's suggestion; then the move was put off from week to week, and from month to month, again and again, for some reason or other." We would have had to say: "In September, after the matter came to nothing, we ourselves took up once more the matter of the peace parley with Wilson, made our suggestions, and received the answer: 'Now that matters are going badly with you, I can not help you, for Roumania has entered into the war; if you turn out successful, when you have defeated Roumania, and if I am elected President again, I shall consider what I shall do.'" In a word, that was Wilson's stand. Do you believe that this truthful report to the German people would have created a feeling in favor of peace mediation by Wilson? I believe the contrary. Then came the elections. We would have had to say, if we were going to tell them all: "After the elections, at a time when the peace move was due, nothing was done. Our side made inquiries, and received no answer." That is the way events appeared to me. Thereupon, on the 16th of November—I took note of the date, because it was of enormous importance—we informed Count Bernstorff that, if the peace proposal did not come about pretty shortly, we would have to proceed in our own way. Then for a week there was no answer. On the 22d of November, we telegraphed from here that we were now contemplating a peace move of our own. Then it finally came to the point of our making our own peace move, and this only because Wilson, in spite of every kind of urging, refused to move. And now he came trotting along behind—a proceeding which makes it extremely doubtful as to what the motives were which really induced Wilson to make his move—why he made it at precisely this time and in precisely this form. This is what we would have had to communicate to the Reichstag if we were going to tell them the entire truth. Do you believe that this would have brought about an inclination in the Reichstag, or an inclination on the part of the people, to have Wilson mediate for peace? Do you believe that this would have had the effect of strengthening the belief in America's desire for peace? I do not think so.

Then comes the period up to the 9th of January, 1917. I will ask Dr. Sinzheimer, who is the one most familiar with the records of the committee: "What new material was contained in the telegrams of this week?" In

these telegrams I see nothing but an attempt on the part of Wilson—I have already ventured to make this the subject of recent comment—to alter his position from that which he originally assumed, according to the statement of Colonel House—for Wilson himself was very inaccessible—that is, to change from the position of the man who brings the belligerents together at the council table without having any material interest in the conditions, to the position of making of himself a “clearing-house”; that is, to change to the condition of the man who assumes a material interest in peace conditions. I have already recently stated that, from this clearing house attitude to the attitude of the peace negotiator was only one little step more—and moreover, a peace mediator who would mediate by means of the butt of his rifle, if we are to judge from what Lansing’s statements and the introduction to Wilson’s note led us to expect.

And here, too, I ask whether you believe that information of this kind would have helped in bringing about a change in the attitude of the Reichstag and a change in public opinion. I have told you, ladies and gentlemen, what my personal view of these matters was. The impression created upon me by the knowledge of these things was that we were sailing straight toward war with the United States, irrespective of the question of the U-boat war. I am convinced that, if complete information concerning these diplomatic secrets had been publicly given, it would have been—I will not say that all would have done so, for a unanimous opinion in such matters as these is not to be had, since there are always those who think differently—but there would have been thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions, who had, up to that time, opposed the U-boat war, who would have had exactly the same experience as I, to wit, they would simply have been strengthened in their conviction that Wilson was no longer to be depended upon and that there was absolutely nothing else for us to do except to launch the U-boat war.

But now, to take up another question. We were still under the old *régime*, we were still a monarchy, and I hear the same note ring in all the questions which are put, to wit; “If we had been a real democracy, perhaps a republic, perhaps only a democracy with a monarchical head, then everything would have happened differently, then all of this would have been avoided; for, in that case, all these things would have been communicated to the enlightened Reichstag and to its committee and to its main committee; and then these gentlemen would have taken the matter in hand, and then the terrible fate of our Fatherland would have been avoided.” To this I ask: What did that democracy do which was on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, and which was a participant with us in all these negotiations? Did, perchance, any one of the members of the honorable committee, or did anyone else, ever hear that the American Congress was informed of these matters when they were in progress? The German Reichstag, at least—

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, I believe that that is really leading us too far afield. I have already, in my opening statement, designated the limits within which the statements of witnesses are to be confined. And this certainly goes beyond those limits.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I submit. I would, however, like to add one thing. According to my distinct recollection, it was not the budget committee, nor was it the main committee, but it was those who took part in the secret conference which took place over there in the other hall, in hall 1 or 2, I believe, in which all the members of the budget committee participated, who were informed in detail from start to finish, concerning the most important matter which occurred, that is, the telegram of Count Bernstorff which arrived here on the 28th of December, and on account of which the Imperial Chancellor went to Pless on the evening of the 28th, as well as the telegram of the Imperial Chancellor which was sent off from Pless on the 29th of December—and these things were, besides, made the subject of discussion. That, in my opinion, constituted the announcement of exact information with a frankness which I believe, did not characterize these matters in any other State.

The CHAIRMAN: Allow me to remark that that was on the 29th of January.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The information was given on the 31st of January.

The CHAIRMAN: Or the 31st of January, in committee room No. 1. I myself took part. But, after all, the situation there was that we were confronted with a settled fact which the Reichstag could no longer change.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Excuse me, that was already the case on the 28th of January, when Count Bernstorff's dispatch arrived. On January 28, there was also a fact in existence concerning which the Admiralty declared—

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly, as a point of fact, the U-boat war had been decided upon on the 9th of January.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Certainly.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: I will not go into particulars with regard to the statements contained in Secretary of State Dr. Helfferich's speech. I must, however, call special attention to a matter which concerns me and which I consider the crucial point: Was the Reichstag fully informed of everything on the 31st of January, by means of such information having been given the party leaders? I must answer this question in the negative. It is perfectly true that, in October, 1916, Dr. Helfferich made the statements which have been repeatedly quoted here: That the unrestricted U-boat war would mean war with the United States and would mean that Germany would be ruined for a hundred years—

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: If it failed.)

—But the thing to be done at that time was to make the Reichstag stand

firm in its declaration against the announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war. At that time, the political branch had the support of the Reichstag in this matter of rejecting the proposition of the unrestricted U-boat war. But, in sharp contrast to such a situation as this, we beheld those two men who had been so emphatic in describing, in October, the dangers in which the unrestricted U-boat war would involve us, taking their stand, in January, in behalf of the U-boat war. I must most emphatically deny that, at that time in January, on the occasion of the final decision, this unavoidable consequence, the inevitable result of the war with the United States, was announced to us in any such way. Gentlemen, if that had been the case, how could I possibly have closed the remarks that I made on the occasion of that final session, after I had pointed out the terrible dangers involved:

But now we must avoid every act which might bring America also down upon us. Not only the government, but the press as well, must exert every effort to keep the United States outside. The result of the war depends upon it.

How could I, as the spokesman of my party, have been able to say anything of this kind if we had been told that America was beyond saving, and that war with America was unavoidable? Why, that is absolutely out of the question. The secret session which has been referred to took place on the same day. I have endeavored to obtain a protocol of this session, but it seems that there is none in existence. I have asked members who participated therein, to what extent they remembered that telegrams from Bernstorff had been read to us. I could get no definite answer on the point. I have consulted Helfferich's book; that secret session is mentioned therein, and it is therein stated that the telegram to Bernstorff was communicated to the Reichstag, but there is nothing about any telegram from Bernstorff having been read to us. In the telegram of January 27, 1917, from Bernstorff to this government, it is stated:

If the U-boat war is commenced forthwith, the President will look upon this as a slap in the face, and war with the United States will be unavoidable.

If that had been read to us—how could I have made that speech, and how could I have stated later, in a personal interview with Mr. v. Bethmann: "Now I see the matter in a somewhat more favorable light; I hope that my worst fears will not be realized!" And Mr. v. Bethmann answered me at that time: "Yes, I hope so too."

Gentlemen, if we had known all that, how could we have been surprised and indignant when we learned, in the summer of 1917, what Count Bernstorff had communicated and what had gone on between Berlin and Washington? At that time, in a session of the main committee at the beginning of July, 1917, I myself brought the matter up and demanded information

from Secretary of State Zimmermann, whether what was then being rumored was correct, to wit, that we had asked Wilson to take up the peace move and that, at that time, word of this kind had been received from our ambassador. How would all this have been possible if I, and my party friends, had been fully informed? And I assume that the other party leaders were taken into confidence to no greater extent than we. I must state these things here; for the question of whether the majority of the Reichstag is jointly responsible, is certainly one of great importance.

The CHAIRMAN: In this connection, I should like to state that, as a matter of fact, these secret sessions were not protocolized, and so no protocol can be in existence. I myself took part at that secret session, and I do not remember that Count v. Bernstorff's telegrams were communicated to us, but I may again call attention to the fact that, on this 31st of January, there was simply nothing more for the Reichstag to do. The matter was absolutely closed and, for this reason, in my opinion, very little purpose is served by going into this question. For the Reichstag was confronted with a *fait accompli*, and there was nothing left for it to change.

But now I should like to direct a question to the witness: Did not the government constantly announce, particularly during the spring sessions, I believe in May, 1916, and, besides, in the sessions of the last of September and the beginning of October, 1916, that the unrestricted U-boat war was not to be taken up; not, indeed, as a matter of principle, but for the reason, as stated in the announcement, that it could not be carried through for the time being, and that that was precisely the view of the Supreme High Command of the Army—a view which did not consider the military situation such as to justify its being launched then? Was that not, perhaps, in the opinion of the witness, one of the accompanying reasons why a majority of the budget committee was willing to place the final decision of the question in the hands of the Supreme High Command of the Army? What is the opinion of the witness on this point? And perhaps I shall ask the Imperial Chancellor, too, for his view of the matter.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: It is very hard to answer such a question under oath. But, nevertheless, I shall try to describe my position with regard to it. I do not agree with Delegate Gothein. If the government had taken its stand on the question of principle, that is, had resolved that the U-boat war should never be launched under any possible contingency, then, far from having been more difficult for parliament, it would have been much more easy for it to take a stand in favor of the U-boat war. The responsibility would, in such case, have been far less weighty. On the contrary, the very fact of our announcement that the U-boat war was an instrumentality of warfare, whose application would have to be determined according to the situation, that our refusal to launch it was merely temporary, and that the Supreme High Command of the Army was only taking a temporary attitude

with regard to the matter, was bound to put the Reichstag face to face with its joint responsibility in the premises, and make it realize fully what its responsibility was. And if, in response to this attitude of the government which said: "We are not fundamentally opposed to the U-boat war"—for this we could not be, nor was this the case with your own party at the time, Mr. Chairman—"we are not fundamentally opposed to the U-boat war, but we are considering the situation as it is at the present time"; if, under these conditions, that political party of the Reichstag which held the balance of power announced: "If the Supreme High Command of the Army desires the U-boat war, and the U-boat war is thereupon launched by the Imperial Chancellor, the Imperial Chancellor is from the outset freed from the burden of his political responsibility with regard to the Reichstag," then, in my opinion, the situation is absolutely clear so far as the Reichstag is concerned.

Now for a statement of fact which has a bearing upon the speech made by Dr. David at that time. I believe that it is very important to establish the fact whether Dr. David's speech, in which he expressed the hope that the United States might possibly be made to remain an outsider, and in which he stated that everything must be done in order to keep the United States an outsider, was made before or after the confidential conference. According to my recollection, it was certainly not made on the 31st of January, but it was made on the 1st of February. That is, on the day after the secret session, and the hope which was expressed by Dr. David was based on the very information which had been given out in the secret session concerning the exchange of telegrams between Count Bernstorff and the Imperial Chancellor. It is for that reason that you read in my book, in connection with the statement that the telegram to Count Bernstorff was communicated to the committee, the following:

Even the majority Social Democrats recognized it (namely, our telegram to Count Bernstorff) as an attempt to keep the United States out of the war and to keep the road to peace unobstructed.

That announcement which was made by the majority Social Democrats at that time in that secret session, to wit: "Perhaps there may still be a way, although it be but a very narrow way"—that is what Mr. Minister of State David expressed when he gave vent to that vague reference on the following day, in the general session of the main committee. For the rest, so far as my book is concerned—and they are trying to find special significance in this, that I did not refer expressly to the fact that, before the reply telegram to Count Bernstorff of the 29th of January was read, the telegram of Count Bernstorff himself was read—my book, which covers more than a thousand pages, is not, naturally, a statement under oath, and it is not to be expected that every word and, above all, every individual incident which is not recorded, can lay claim to the same weight as a statement made under

oath involving the obligation to speak the pure truth and the whole truth. Nor today can I state under oath that the telegram from Count Bernstorff was read word for word; for neither did I, on my part, draw up a protocol of the events of the session; and one's memory, no matter how good it is, is bound to have become overloaded with details after four and a half years of war. But I believe that I can certainly say that my definite recollection is that Count Bernstorff's telegram was read by Secretary of State Zimmermann.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: I simply wanted to state that my hope to keep America an outsider is not to be attributed solely to this secret session, although this secret session increased my hopes. But if the passage from Count Bernstorff's telegram had been read in the secret session—the passage to which I have already referred—naturally, the opposite would have been the result and the pitiful remnant of hope which I was nursing would have completely vanished.

Witness Imperial Chancellor v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: In connection with the subject which we are now discussing, I should like to refer back to a statement of Dr. David which I do not altogether understand. Minister of State Dr. David said that in October, 1916, if the government had taken the firmest possible stand against the U-boat war, it would have had a majority of the Reichstag behind it. It was exactly in October, 1916, that the Center party adopted its resolution, by the terms of which the majority announced itself as in favor of the U-boat war in case the latter was thought desirable by the Supreme High Command of the Army. So that, in this connection, I should be inclined to believe that, after all, the statements of Minister of State Dr. David might still be considered such as to put the matter in a not quite correct light.

Now, with regard to the telegram of Count Bernstorff of the 28th of January, and our communications made in secret conference, I may venture to express myself as follows: I most certainly—I believe that I have already touched upon this point—considered the communications of so excellent an ambassador as Count Bernstorff as entitled to great weight. But I have also explained the reasons why the home office may not be able to find it possible, in all cases, to adopt, without amendment, the proposals and the views of its ambassadors. This involves no criticism of the ambassador in question, but is merely due to the fact that the home office makes its decisions on individual questions depend upon the general situation, whereas an ambassador so shut off from contact with Europe as Count Bernstorff was during this war, was more disposed to reach his decisions from the standpoint of the locality in which he was residing at the time. Now it seems that the situation—and it is in this way that we can explain the statements to which Minister of State Dr. David has referred—that the situation was somewhat changed by our telegram of the 30th of January

from what it had been described to us to be by Count Bernstorff in his telegram of the 28th of January. In this telegram we disclosed to the President a very moderate peace program—a peace program so moderate that the representatives not only of the Conservatives and National Liberals, who took part in that confidential session, but, likewise, the leaders of the Center, suggested to me that if, after all, we should reach the point of peace negotiations, I should not adhere to the modest demands of this peace program. So that we had confidentially communicated to President Wilson a very moderate peace program which, in my opinion, was of a nature to encourage progress along the lines of peace.

The CHAIRMAN: But, your Excellency, these points have, as a matter of fact, been taken up time and again.

Witness v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: And still reference to them has been constantly made in the course of Minister of State Dr. David's question on these points. I must certainly be allowed, on my part, to refer back, if the other side does so. The situation was also changed—I shall make only a brief statement—by the fact that we had stated to Wilson that we would immediately desist from the U-boat war if he could give us any assurance that we would come to the point of peace negotiations which would be acceptable to us. So that there we have a change in the political situation, and in contemplation thereof—this is what I wanted to state—I said, during that conference—of course, I can not remember at the present time the exact words used—that it would be taken for granted that we would exert ourselves to the greatest possible extent, in the face of this resolve concerning the U-boat war, to keep America an outsider. It is to this circumstance, I believe, that reference is drawn with regard to those words which Minister of State Dr. David has referred to in his speech.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to call attention, at this point, to the fact that this last telegram of Count Bernstorff, together with earlier telegrams, are to this effect. But, according to my recollection, there was certainly a hope held out to us at that secret conference, although it was a slim one, that America would merely break off diplomatic relations with us, but would not become involved in war with us. I should like to call attention to the fact that, since we were confronted with a *fait accompli* which it was no longer possible for us to modify in any way, my party reached a decision at that time to the effect that, from then on, we would take the stand, although we were opposed to this announcement concerning the U-boat war, that we would put no obstacles in the way, so far as we were concerned. In view of the fact that his Excellency Helfferich, both in the prior session and today, has gone into the question of the attitude taken and, in so doing, has made particular reference both to myself and my party, I consider it essential to state, in order to avoid any possible misconception arising from the protocols, particularly with regard to the statements which

his Excellency Helfferich has made, to wit, that if Dr. Struve and I took our stand in favor of hurrying up U-boat construction, this was equivalent to our being in agreement with the launching of the U-boat war, that—

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Not in favor of the launching of the U-boat war, but of the possibility of the U-boat war.

The CHAIRMAN:—to take into consideration the possibility of the U-boat war. Our attitude as a party—and this attitude was expressed, so far as these political questions were concerned, by the spokesman of the party, Mr. v. Payer, and myself—was that, first of all, we considered the intensive U-boat warfare permissible, that is, warfare involving an attack upon armed merchant ships, which we considered fighting craft; furthermore, that, with qualifications, and in the nature of a reprisal in view of England's conduct, we also considered unrestricted U-boat warfare carried on within the limits of a comparatively restricted area, permissible in principle also; but that, above all, we considered this question a political question on account of its political effects upon the entrance of the United States of America into the ranks of our enemies—a step which we might certainly expect to be taken if this U-boat war should be declared. For this reason, and up to the last, we announced ourselves, with absolute definiteness, as being opposed to the unrestricted U-boat war, and this fact can not be altered by the circumstance that one or two party mugwumps such as are always, of course, to be found in every great party, may have possibly expressed themselves to the opposite effect in private conversations. We considered this question a political question *par excellence*, and his Excellency Helfferich will remember that, in this hall, when the much-discussed announcement by the Center party was delivered and the attempt was made by the budget committee to change it into the form of a resolution which was to be kept confidential and to be transmitted to the government only, I successfully raised a point of order against it, on the ground that the authority of the budget committee, on its part, was limited to submitting resolutions to the whole house. Consequently, this matter failed at that time.

If his Excellency Helfferich attempts to conclude that because Dr. Struve and I always took a firm stand in favor of an increased U-boat construction, we were not opposed to the unrestricted U-boat war on principle, this conclusion is not justified. I remember—I believe his Excellency will confirm my recollection in this matter—that, for years, I always fought in favor of having our U-boats provided with a stronger rifle armament—for it is well known that only two of our U-boats were provided with such armament at the commencement of the U-boat war—and that I always supported the proposition at that time, when the small 4.4 centimeter rifles were being built, that, first of all, the 8.8 centimeter rifles should be introduced, and then, later, the 10.5, for the very purpose of making it possible for the U-boats to carry on a war on commerce with success. If his Excellency

Helfferich has referred to the fact that, at that time—was it in the spring of 1915 or 1916?—the U-boat war was bringing about such a paucity of results when, waged in the form of a war on commerce, this is due above all things, to the fact, according to my recollection, that our U-boats were insufficiently provided with rifle armament necessary for the conduct of the war on commerce. So that, from the start, our attitude was clear-cut and consistent, and continued to be absolutely clear-cut, not only at the time of the October session, but at the sessions of the 31st of January and 1st of February, respectively. So much with regard to that statement.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I believe that at this stage of the proceedings we must decide to take certain absolutely distinct questions as the bases of the individual phases of the proceedings, and I would like, at this point, to have an important question taken up, and to make this question the basis of proceedings for the present, namely, whether, as a matter of fact, the unrestricted U-boat war was, under conditions existing at that time, the only method which could be employed for the purpose of saving Germany from defeat or ruin, or whether there was a possibility of negotiating which, if it had perhaps been taken advantage of, might have resulted in bringing about peace without having to make use of the fatal instrumentality of warfare last referred to. In this connection, I would like to read some passages from the record. Up to the present time it has not been possible to connect a reading of the original documents with the statements made by the witnesses. In my opinion, it is not possible to present the matter adequately, if the statements of the individual witnesses only, are heard in connection with the various questions. I request that the next question to be taken up be the following: Under the conditions existing at that time, were we bound to make use of the unrestricted U-boat war as the one remaining instrumentality, or was it possible to seek other political methods? In this connection, I should like to read some passages.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should like to be heard on this point.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, I would like, first of all, at this time to have a few passages read, and will give you an opportunity to speak later.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: This has also to do with the question of the information given the Reichstag.

First of all, I may be allowed to read something which I referred to in my opening statement; it refers to that so-called move by a neutral Power. I am simply reading what I stated at that time:

According to the reports of Count v. Bernstorff that the feeling in America was strongly in favor of peace, and that public opinion supported Wilson's peace proposal, on the 18th of December a communication was received in Berlin from one of our ambassadors who gave us news of an official announcement made by a neutral Power, which it would not be proper for me to mention here, according to which there

was good prospect of a peace appeal being issued by Wilson, and that the Power in question had good ground to believe that the other side, as well, was inclined to peace negotiations if we would be willing to give some information regarding our peace conditions, with particular reference to the guarantee, restoration and complete independence of Belgium.

Now in this connection, I should further like to call attention to the fact that, in January, one of our military attachés, assigned to a great and important neutral State, made the following report:

It is possible that, even today, the cause of peace might be advanced if it were possible to convince the future peace party in England that the terrible sacrifices made necessary by the war for the ideal war aims are unnecessary. Regardless of who may wish it, the Belgian question can not be avoided. I perfectly appreciate all the arguments which can be urged against a settlement of the Belgian question for the purpose of furthering the interests of peace at the present time. At the same time, we must be perfectly clear on the point that the acquisition of Belgium, or even of a small portion of Belgium, can, neither today nor ever, be obtained as the result of negotiations. He who wishes to keep Belgium must be able to dictate his own peace to the world. It is a subject which the world of today will refuse to discuss. Every answer of our opponents to the German peace proposal proves once more the quite overwhelming significance of the Belgian question in this World War.

That is what I wanted to present at this moment, in a preliminary way.

So it was, your Excellency, that, on the 18th of December, our ambassador expressed himself as follows concerning an official participation by a neutral Power: "Say something about peace conditions, and state that you are ready to restore Belgium's independence absolutely; I have good reason to believe that, in that case, the Entente will be ready to negotiate." Here in this report from our military attaché, the view is announced to you—just the view!—that an agreement, a peace of understanding, would be absolutely out of the question unless preceded by that announcement concerning the Belgian question of which the neutral Power had spoken. Now I ask you—and I must say that, so far as I am concerned, this is a crucial point; I talked it over with you a short while ago in private, as you know—Why was the attempt never made, before making use of this final instrumentality of war, to play one last card on behalf of peace? Why was the attempt not made to encourage the willingness of our enemies to negotiate by some such statement and by officially announcing what our peace conditions would be—for our enemies were the people concerned? I can readily realize—to add one more sentence to my remarks—that it is a practical thing and a customary thing to make maximum demands when you have come to the point of negotiating, when you are actually in the midst of negotiations. But when the other side absolutely refuses to negotiate, the question arises: How

shall I get the other side to come to the point of negotiating? Now, you were informed by these original documents which I have selected, that the willingness to negotiate could only be brought about if you were willing to disclose your peace conditions and—this is a condition *sine qua non*—make that announcement concerning Belgium which the whole world was waiting for. Then, and then only, would it have been possible—for no absolute proof of certainty could be given—would it have been possible that the willingness to enter into negotiations might, perhaps, have come into being. That is the point which I should like, first of all, to put to you.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that it would be expedient for former Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to make a statement in reply to this question.

If you please, your Excellency.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe that the statements made by a neutral Power, concerning which the recorder has just spoken, can only be made the subject of reference and comment after the confidential sessions concerning these statements of the neutral Power which are still in contemplation have taken place. Before these proceedings have occurred, it will be absolutely impossible for me to take up this question.

If I have understood the recorder correctly, he has at least, so far as my standpoint is concerned—but I will start again, in different language: In the statements which I have made up to this time, I have explained the attitude which I took on the 9th of January with regard to the U-boat war, in this way: After the answer which the Entente gave to our peace proposal, I stated that the willingness of the Entente to negotiate was out of the question. I do not believe that it is necessary for me to emphasize the fact that this was the crucial point, so far as my attitude was concerned. I have already explained that here in detail. Now Dr. Sinzheimer says: "If it is true that there was no willingness to negotiate, why did you not create such a willingness to negotiate by means of an announcement concerning Belgium?" My understanding is correct, is it not, Dr. Sinzheimer?

(Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Certainly.)

This, then, raises the question whether it would not have been more correct to give out an absolutely unqualified statement concerning Belgium, to the effect that Belgium would be restored, and that this should have been done not only in December, 1916, but at the beginning of the war, and that the support of this stand by the people should have been acquired. For the moment, I will not go into this problem; I do not believe that it is material to the question at the present time, but that the real question is whether, at that moment, such an announcement would have been politically correct; and I am of the opinion that such an announcement, made at a point of time when the Entente was standing for peace conditions which meant the ruin of Germany, would have been an unwise stroke of policy, as it would have

meant that we would restore Belgium in its entirety. This is a matter of opinion, concerning which I do not believe that a definite and conclusive judgment can be given. Something can be said on both sides. At that particular moment, I did not consider it the wise thing to do. The fact that later on the moment came at which I intended to make such an announcement and to make it publicly—to bring about the possibility of making it at a moment which, as I believe, would, *per se*, have been the right psychological moment, and when such an announcement, I believe, would have led to results, is a fact concerning which I shall have occasion to speak in detail during the further course of the investigation.

So far as I know, that is a question which has, as yet, not been touched upon and which, moreover, I would not be in a position to take up today, because certain official matters concerned therewith would have first to be settled in the Foreign Office. So that, at the present time, I can simply state, in answer to Dr. Sinzheimer's question, that, in my opinion, neither December of 1916 nor January of 1917 was the right moment, politically speaking, for such an announcement concerning Belgium, because the Entente had expressed its unwillingness to take up the question of negotiations in the words in which its joint note of December 30 had been expressed.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: May I be heard?

The CHAIRMAN: His Excellency Zimmermann first.

(Secretary of State ZIMMERMANN: No, I thank you!)

You decline, then. In such case, your Excellency Helfferich.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I can verify Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg's view as a view which existed at that time, and not only as a judgment rendered after the event; for I shared the opinion entertained by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg at that time. For that reason, it is necessary for me to supplement his statement in two regards only. As a matter of fact, Wilson was confidentially informed by us that we did not wish to annex Belgium, and Wilson characterized this communication as "valuable in the extreme." But thereupon the message to the Senate came along, which made the impression upon us which I have already made the subject of comment.

Secondly: Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg was quite right in saying that the mysterious matter to which Dr. Sinzheimer has alluded is so much in the dark that it can not have light thrown upon it here in this committee, but will have to be explained in secret session. For the sole purpose, however, of avoiding any erroneous impression, I should like—I shall be cautious—to emphasize the fact that the telegram referred to by Dr. Sinzheimer and which is dated the 17th of December—

(Interruption by DR. SINZHEIMER: 18th of December!)

—the telegram dates from the 17th and was presented on the 18th to the committee—was followed by a further telegram of the 18th of December, coming from the same German foreign representative, which was presented

on the 19th. (Interruption.) That is to be found in volume 5, the confidential volume. You can find the first on page 2, and the other on page 4. In this second telegram, our representative at the post in question stated that the minister of foreign affairs at that place, who must have been in the position to form a judgment concerning the communications which had been made to him, had stated that the suggestions made by the party in question, of the 17th, were "partly of no value, and partly a confirmation of our impression." I feel obliged to add this at this point, in order to prevent the impression from coming up that a communication had been submitted to us, quite free from objections of any kind, concerning the intrinsic value of which it was impossible for any doubt to exist. But as I have stated, I shall go no further than this. What else happens must take place in secret conference.

Expert DR. BONN: The fundamental question in this whole connection is probably the following: Did we have sufficient confidence in President Wilson to believe that he was in earnest in his peace negotiations? This question can be divided into two parts: Up to the time of his announcement in December, were we fully justified in entertaining the doubt that he was going to do anything anyway? After he had actually done something, it was naturally impossible to continue to entertain this doubt. We then come—there are various intermittent stages, which I omit from consideration—to the message of the 22d of January. On this point, I am very much of the impression that, as a matter of fact, the conception here was absolutely different from the conception on the other side.

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That is true.)

Now, his Excellency Helfferich says that, under the American influence, Count Bernstorff had—

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Professor Bonn, excuse me if I interrupt you. Would it not, perhaps, be best for me to finish with this first question, and for us then to take up the note at once which I, too, look upon as a second fundamental question?

Expert DR. BONN: I agree with you absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, then, if Professor Bonn agrees, we will continue with this point.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I simply wanted to finish with the question whether the possibility of negotiations existed likewise before the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war. Now, you state here that, in the course of the year, before the 30th, we had informed Wilson that we did not desire to annex Belgium. So we must try to find out what this expression meant and how it was interpreted, in part, in foreign countries. We have learned the peace conditions of the 12th of December. By virtue of these conditions, Belgium was not to be annexed, but a part of Belgium, to wit, Liège, in case guarantees were not available; and I recollect that the records

contain a report from London from one source of information which states expressly that the expressions regarding the non-annexation of Belgium had made a good impression in England; that the only apprehension felt on that score was that the provision did not exclude the possible annexation of Liège. And one more thing, your Excellency. We did not want to annex Belgium, the whole of Belgium, but we wanted to have political, economic and military guarantees. Circumstances can arise when such a restriction of sovereign powers without incorporation as a federate state, with all the rights of German States members of the federation, can mean a far more complete condition of national subordination than such incorporation would mean. I lead to this, your Excellency, simply for the purpose of saying to you that this bare assertion "we do not intend to annex Belgium," in view of the official announcements which had already been made, to wit, "that we wanted to have military, economic and political control over Belgium and, for this purpose, we wanted guarantees and separation of Flanders and Wallonia," and in view of the fact that the purpose existed of possibly annexing Liège—that this assertion could not have that effect of liberation from all domination which should have been the effect of the announcement. More or less the following had already been officially stated: Administrative separation between Wallonia and Flanders, and, moreover, there had been further talk to the effect that we were bound to claim guarantees with regard to Belgium, which it was considered best to make the subject of agreement with the King of the Belgians personally; the annexation of Liège was contemplated—

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: But only possible annexation.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In case this guarantee could not be obtained. That was exactly what the Belgians were afraid of, to wit, that by the adoption of this dependent form, they would be robbed of their sovereignty; and this was what our enemies felt, too, and the feeling was not limited only to hostile countries, but this was the way the matter was looked upon in the neutral countries. So that I believe that the bare announcement, "we do not intend to annex Belgium," was not such an announcement that, for the purpose of bringing about a peace of understanding, was likely to foster a willingness to engage in negotiations, although, perhaps, it might; the point is undoubtedly open to a certain amount of conjecture. After all, the fact is that an effort was not made which might, perhaps, have been able to bring about peace without the use of U-boats.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should like to voice my protest against what is alleged by the recording secretary here to have been the case, to wit, that, according to repeated semiofficial announcements, it was our desire to keep political, military, and financial control of Belgium. I never stated that that was the case. That was a phrase which Delegate to the Reichstag Dr. Spahn made use of after I had spoken of guarantees.

At that time, I did not consider it expedient, on account of tactical reasons, to oppose a direct contradiction to Delegate Dr. Spahn's statement. But in this case, the doctrine that silence gives consent does not hold.

But let us, I beg, just look at this Belgian problem from the following point of view: if we had stated that Belgium was to be restored to a state of absolute independence, was a state of absolute independence a possible thing so far as Belgium was concerned, if it was to be controlled politically, financially and militarily by the Entente? In that case, we would have no independent Belgium at all. Germany had a natural interest in not having an independent Belgium submitted to the dominion of England and France superimposed by force. Kindly construe the announcements which I made in the Reichstag in this way. Was I not bound, if I had a proper conception of German interests—and, after all, that was my task—was I not bound to say, using other terms, I admit, than those which I use today: "Yes, but that the French and the British are to rule in Belgium, that they are to use it as a bulwark against us—no, that would be in conflict with our interests." We must protect ourselves against anything of this kind. That is what the purpose was. I believe that if we take our stand on this purely German platform, there are, after all, certain points of view in connection with the Belgian problem which will become apparent which, perhaps, have been overlooked in the proceedings so far as they have progressed. That is all I wish to say on this feature.

But now Dr. Sinzheimer has again come back to this point: "Yes, but if at that time, in December and January, 1916, we had taken up the question of the absolute independence of Belgium more in detail than we did in the statement which we made to Wilson 'that we did not intend to annex it,' then, perhaps, we would have produced a willingness to negotiate." But the recorder is not absolutely sure of his point in this connection, is he? Of course, there are always times during the pursuance of a policy when one must entertain no doubt on the point as to whether one both can and must undertake a risky step at a particular moment. And, according to my conviction, politically speaking, a step consisting in a public announcement concerning Belgium at that particular point of time would have been a risky step, because we were face to face with an Entente which had flung a list of war aims into our faces which not only gave great offense to German feelings but which, as a matter of fact, put us in a very unfavorable situation. I admit that individual statesmen will always be able to take the ground that before this resolve, this momentous resolve to launch the U-boat war, was taken, everything, including the very last thing, should have been tried, even if it were to bring us prejudice. And this stand will always be taken; an agreement on the point will probably never be reached. Of course, in all questions of this kind, I am only in the position of saying to the committee that such-and-such considerations guided my acts at

certain times. Of course, in view of the way in which the war ended, I can not undertake, nor am I willing to attempt, to sustain the proposition that what I did was right. In view of the outcome, it is extremely easy to point to every move which I made and to state that it was not successful and that, consequently, it was wrong and not guided by reason. Of course, I must bow before this criticism; but, in the interests of truth, I can do nothing else than to inform you of the elements which guided the course of my actions at a given moment. The judgment which you reach in the premises is your own affair. I shall have to submit to that judgment. I can only try to make plain to you that the reasons which guided me were, after all, not snatched haphazard from the air, but that there was really some definite cause for the actual steps which were taken.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I can merely agree with the statements made by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, and I would add a statement expressing the maxims which guided my actions in passing upon such questions during the war.

It is a good plan to indicate the possibility of concessions being made to an enemy who is himself ready to enter into negotiations or is not disinclined to negotiate. On the other hand, the making of concessions to an opponent who has made up his mind to carry on the conflict is the greatest political mistake which can be perpetrated. Moreover, I should like to call attention to the fact that the reservations of the political branch of the government, with regard to the Belgian question, were very strongly supported both in parliament and by public opinion. If I remember correctly, in July, 1917, at the conference concerning the peace resolution, the entire Reichstag, with the exception of the Independent Social Democrats, refused to give a public and definite announcement concerning Belgium. If my memory serves me truly, the Independent Social Democrats requested such an announcement in terms. The entire Reichstag, including the majority Social Democrats, considered that at that time, that is, six months later, it would be unwise as a matter of policy to issue such an announcement. So this fact shows how, with the advance of time, men become wiser, and that it is easier to get a proper conception of events after the fact than before they have occurred.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency stated that it was the greatest of all mistakes to manifest a willingness to make concessions to an opponent who is not ready to enter into negotiations. Is it not possible that the position of the opponent becomes weakened by the fact that an inclination for peace is created in the minds of the people themselves, if an indication of a willingness to make concessions is made manifest, for in every nation there are, after all, two tides of thought: one which, under such circumstances, expresses the desire to push on with the war to the end, and the other which desires that peace be concluded and that further unnecessary sacrifices be avoided.

Is it your conviction that, under all circumstances, the greatest mistake—speaking generally—that can be committed, is to manifest a willingness to make concessions in such a case, which would lead, under certain conditions, to emphasizing this difference of opinion entertained by the people and, in so doing, weaken the attitude of the enemy government?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I believe that we are now entering upon an academic discussion; but I shall be glad to give you an answer. There are soft people and there are hard people; the soft people would be inclined to pursue the path which has been described by Mr. Chairman Gothein, whereas the hard people would be inclined to select the other method. To judge the possible effect is very difficult and depends upon the psychology of the different nations. I believe that I actually perceived, to my great dismay, particularly in July, 1917, that those among our opponents who were inclined to make peace were weakened in their position most of all by our ill-timed willingness to make concessions.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: It was stated that in July, 1917, all the political parties, with the exception of the Independents, that is, including the majority Social Democrats, did not consider it expedient for an announcement to be issued relative to the restoration of Belgium.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That is what I remember, to the best of my belief.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: That is not true, so far as my party is concerned, because we took our stand at Stockholm in June for the independence of Belgium.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: If my recollection serves me correctly, the fact is that a proposal made to this effect was expressly rejected. However, I can not swear to it—one can not do that. My recollection is, however, that the resolution was rejected at a plenary session of the Reichstag, in opposition to the votes of the Independents. However, this must, of course, appear in the records of the Reichstag.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall have the records of the Reichstag searched in this connection.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, you said that there were soft and that there were hard people. There is, however, another maxim in existence which you and the Imperial Chancellor have cited in support of your views, namely, that there are certain imponderable elements, and that it was the aim and purpose of our peace proposal of the 12th of December to influence those minorities of the hostile nations which were inclined towards peace. In my opinion, too, that was the proper thing to do. But views may differ on the point. Is it not a fact that the course of your entire peace policy, as well as the reason for it, was guided by this maxim which has been mentioned by Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg and by yourself?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Judged after the fact, the peace proposal of the 12th of December was, in my opinion, a mistake, for it did not bring about the result which was expected of it. And it was precisely the reception which greeted our peace proposal of the 12th of December which was of particular significance so far as my further judgment of our policy was concerned. If you make a mistake, there is no greater error which you can commit than to repeat it. Once you have your willingness to make peace, which you have publicly expressed, meet with the kind of rejection with which it was met by the Entente on the 30th of December, 1916—a rejection which was emphasized on the 10th of January, so far as Wilson was concerned—and if, thereupon, and not so very much later, after having become acquainted with the point of view of the other side—according to Dr. Sinzheimer's proposition, in fact very soon thereafter—we had come out with a proposal with regard to Belgium, and if still later—I will not anticipate too much—in spite of the fact that it has been made manifest that these means are useless, we proceed to repeat the mistake, then, according to my view, the political situation becomes hopeless.

The CHAIRMAN: If I recollect correctly, his Excellency v. Bethmann explained, a little while ago, that our peace proposal of the 12th of December was a compromise, and that it had probably failed to a certain extent in its effect, on account of the curtness of form in which it had been clothed and which was attributed to military influences. I believe that I am right in recollecting that the statement was recently made to that effect. As we know, there was injected the element consisting of the Emperor's speech at Mülhausen of the 13th, which acted as a commentary upon this peace proposal. Would we not be bound to conclude therefrom that both the form and the commentary upon this proposal were such as to injure its effect? At least, that is what his Excellency v. Bethmann recently gave us to understand, if my recollection is correct.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: In spite of this, in my opinion, the course taken by our peace proposal was clear, and I believe that the subsequent publication of the Emperor's letter which I have recently read to you here, which, to my surprise, created astonishment, assisted in clarifying this course.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Why, the Emperor's letter had been made known for a long time. All the papers carried it.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Yes, it was published shortly after the peace proposal of the 12th of December. To my surprise, it has now had the effect of creating astonishment.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Not so far as we are concerned.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Naturally, not so far as you are concerned, Dr. Sinzheimer. But let us not try to confuse one another. I say that, in spite of this or that statement which might possibly have been capable of

being considered as having an unfavorable effect, according to my view, the course which our peace proposal was to take is absolutely clear. I should like to ask you gentlemen to reflect. Take the answer which the Entente gave us. Take the answer—and this is much more serious—in the form that it was made to Wilson; do you really believe that, as the result of any tactical oversight, as the result of any small change, the path which it was destined that the world should take would have been altered by so much more or so much less? Do you believe that, as the result of any small change in our method of preparation, we should have received a different reply from our enemies? I do not believe so. I have recently stated that I look upon the peace proposal of the 12th of December, although in the end it failed to bring about the purpose sought, as an act which will inure to the glory of the German Emperor and—for, after all, it received the support of the people—as an act inuring to the glory of the German people, by virtue of which our sincere desire for peace was made a matter of record for the whole world and for all future generations to read. When the excitement of the present has died down, then this fact will be confirmed in every particular; then people will no longer be able to carp and cavil at it. But it was an error, for here every political measure is an error which did not bring about the desired result. The academic question of whether and under what circumstances it is right to make a peace proposal and to repeat it, is a matter into which it will be practicable to go in detail, once we have before us the occurrences of July, 1917. Then this question which is the decisive one, will have to be examined. You know my conviction on the point, and I believe that Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg shares it. We were in the summer—

The CHAIRMAN: We will not discuss this question further at this point; it will lead us too far afield.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Of course, I have no need of expressing my view on the subject; it is a matter of common knowledge.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, you have just directed a very severe bit of criticism against the peace proposal of December 12th.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: No, on the contrary. I called it a glorious event.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Certainly, but on the other hand you said that it was the greatest mistake of all.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I simply said that every political measure which did not result favorably is a political error.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But I call your particular attention to the following: On the next day, in the telegram which you have read here, the Emperor spoke of the "peace of victory" which he was bound to attain. This telegram was published broadcast in foreign countries, as was stated in the *Berliner Tageblatt*—and that must be established and will be established

here—as the result of an indiscretion or by influence brought to bear upon the Wolff Telegraph Bureau. Do you, your Excellency, not ascribe largely to the publication of this telegram the working of those influences to which the peace proposal finally fell a victim?

I may call attention to another matter, and I believe that Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann will confirm me in the statement. At first, the reports which were received from the neutral countries with regard to the operation of the peace proposal were favorable in the extreme. Suddenly, reports began coming in, to the effect that this favorable attitude no longer existed, and that it was becoming unfavorable. I believe that I am correct in recollecting that certain reports came in which stated that the speech of the Emperor had a detrimental effect in foreign countries. Of course, we can still take the testimony of witnesses concerning this point.

The CHAIRMAN: We will not revert to this question to any great extent; for we have already made it the subject of detailed discussion. Moreover, Consul Müller has asked to be allowed to say a word with regard to this question at this point.

Consul MÜLLER: I should like to make a short statement with regard to the question of the publication of the Emperor's speech at Mülhausen on the 13th of December, 1916. We have made inquiries at the Wolff Telegraph Bureau, and investigations as well. There are no grounds for believing that information with regard to this speech of the Emperor was sent to the Wolff Telegraph Bureau by the Foreign Office. The original of the instructions which were given to have the article published in foreign countries, and which went to the Wolff Telegraph Bureau at that time, was, as has been shown to be the case, destroyed when the Wolff Telegraph Bureau was occupied by the Spartacists. (Laughter.)

Delegate DR. SPAHN: The Imperial Chancellor has spoken of a statement which I made in the Reichstag. I venture to remark that I added at that time that the sovereignty of Belgium should be respected and should be made the matter of agreement when peace was concluded.

Expert DR. BONN: Up to the present time, the question of whether Wilson was trustworthy has continuously been thrust into the foreground. I have already attempted to have that point gone into. The first period of the distrust which was felt in connection with Wilson's failure to act came to an end at the moment when he actually moved. The second question has to do with the message of the 22d of January. In this connection, I received the impression very strongly that his Excellency Helfferich interprets this message quite differently from the way in which it was interpreted in the United States. He speaks of the "American influence" as it affected Count Bernstorff. But the fact is that people on this side construed the message to the Senate the same way that Count Bernstorff does. I will simply call attention to the remarks of Chief of Police v. Lüdinghausen, which were

made public by Professor Baumgarten and which were written on the 24th of January, 1917. I do not know that it is necessary to read them here. Now, his Excellency has attempted, so to speak, to tell us what Wilson's real purpose was. It would seem to be expedient to continue further along this line. What a man has thought is a matter which we can not establish free from contradiction. In any event, I believe that President Wilson would be very grateful to you for your opinion. At the present he is having a very hard time in proving to his adherents that he has not been inconsistent. You have given him a character testimonial to the effect that he has always been consistent. What I want to bring out is something else, namely, the terms of the message. I believe, in the last analysis, that we must take the ground that we must, first of all, give words their usual meaning before we interpret. Now, you say, if I recollect correctly, that your impression was that Wilson wanted to meddle in matters on concrete peace terms. Is that correct?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I called attention to the fact that it was precisely Wilson's statement with regard to Poland which constituted an actual interposition by him into the matter of concrete peace terms.

Expert DR. BONN: Just let me read the passage, and, in fact, use the translation which comes from the Foreign Office:

We shall have no voice in determining what those terms shall be, but we shall, I feel sure, have a voice in determining whether they shall be made lasting or not by the guarantees of a universal covenant.

That means, of course, the League of Nations. So that, if I correctly understand it, Wilson refused expressly to have a voice in the peace conditions. On the other hand, America will have a voice so far as the League of Nations is concerned. America desires to make the question of whether it will support the League of Nations or not, depend upon the contents of the peace terms.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Upon the contents of the peace terms?

Expert DR. BONN: I will go a step further.

I do not mean to say (the message continues at another place) that any American Government would throw any obstacle in the way of any terms of peace the governments now at war might agree upon—

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Go on.

Expert DR. BONN:

—or seek to upset them when made, whatever they might be.

As I say, whether honorably meant or not is a point about which we shall not quarrel. But those are the words used.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Yes. Please read further, Professor Bonn.

Expert DR. BONN: "I only take it for granted that mere terms of peace between the belligerents will not satisfy even the belligerents themselves."

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Mere terms of peace!

Expert DR. BONN: "Mere agreements may not make peace secure. It will be absolutely necessary that a force be created as a guarantor of the permanency of the settlement so much greater than the force of any nation now engaged. . . ."

Delegate Dr. SINZHEIMER: An agreement is not looked upon as sufficient, but a league. That is the basic thought.

Expert DR. BONN: Certainly. Now, if I may venture to take up the Polish question, the sentence reads as follows:

No peace can last, or ought to last, which does not recognize and accept the principle that governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that no right anywhere exists to hand peoples about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were property. I take it for granted, for instance, if I may venture upon a single example, that statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland, and that henceforth inviolable security of life, of worship, and of industrial and social development should be guaranteed to all peoples who have lived hitherto under the power of governments devoted to a faith and purpose hostile to their own.

In this connection, we must say the following: Until peace came, a great portion of Poland still belonged to the Russian Empire. So that Wilson took the stand, by this announcement, that Russian Poland was not to revert to Russia. It follows that that is in agreement with our policy as to Poland. The point open to doubt is whether or not all the Poles in the German Empire were included in the term of an independent, autonomous Poland. Of course, we are limited to exchanging opinions on this point. I would, however, like to point out one thing. The United States call themselves the "United States"—"United States of America." Canada, which also belongs to America, is not included in the term "United States." So that, even if we wanted to submit an interpretation based upon philological reasons only, it would not be enough to conclude that all Poland, or all territory which was Polish beyond question, as is stated later in the fourteen points, would necessarily belong to this Poland. I can only deduce from this the purpose of having the Polish question settled in some way or other, but not in any definite way. The next sentence strengthens my view, as a matter of fact; for if the next sentence is logical, it can only have this meaning, that there will always be national minorities who inhabit a foreign state and whose cultural interests—to make use of the phrase—must be protected. But as I say, I do not want to interpret, I simply want to read.

Then I must take up another point. Your Excellency stated that, in

your opinion, Wilson's announcement meant—if I may use a somewhat common expression—a box on the ear, so far as we were concerned; that we had had a scolding; and that, on the other hand, the Allies had not been lectured, and that their demands had been announced as being capable of discussion. Now here, too, the words are as follows:

The Central Powers united in a reply which stated merely that they were ready to meet their antagonists in conference to discuss terms of peace. The Entente Powers have replied much more definitely and have stated, in general terms, indeed, but with sufficient definiteness to imply details, the arrangements, guarantees, and acts of reparation which they deem to be the indispensable conditions of a satisfactory settlement. We are that much nearer a definite discussion of the peace which shall end the present war. We are that much nearer the discussion of the international concert which must thereafter hold the world at peace.

So that it is not stated herein—the translation is mine; no other construction can be put upon the English text which I have here as well—that the conditions of the Allies are really such as can be discussed, but simply that, in view of the fact that the one side has expressed itself in a certain manner, and the other in a different manner, we have now come nearer to the general discussion.

And now I would like to take up another point. Your Excellency has said that the Allies had stated to Wilson, in a manner approaching that of a challenge, that we were not parties enjoying equal rights—that we were not considered as being entitled to equal rights.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: They did not wish to put themselves on the same plane with us.

Expert DR. BONN: And you went a step further and stated that the peace of Versailles was, to a certain extent, foreshadowed in the Wilson peace conditions. I should not like to be in error on this point.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I will explain that later. It is a very important point. I will explain it later.

Expert DR. BONN: The real issue in connection with these peace conditions was, after all, the fact that Wilson declared in so many words that he desired no peace based on violence. Above all, the idea was expressed that it would have to be a peace without victory.

Those are the points with regard to which I should like to have your opinion once more.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: To begin with, so far as the Polish question is concerned, the statement which was recently made by Count v. Bernstorff, in my opinion, hits the nail exactly on the head—the statement that President Wilson had absolutely no conception, absolutely no correct ideas of the conditions in our eastern provinces and in Poland. For this reason, it was all the more important for him to make no mention of it. But at least

he was bound to know one thing, and that was that the Polish question was one which was extremely delicate, so far as Prussia and Germany were concerned. If President Wilson declared that it was taken for granted by the statesmen of the world that a united, independent and autonomous Poland must exist, and if, in immediate connection therewith, he demanded a free outlet to the sea under the protection of an international guarantee, then, in my opinion, taking this together with the remaining terms of the note, this constitutes a proof that Wilson, let us say it frankly, found himself in the toils of the piano-player and present President of Poland, Mr. Paderewski, and would possibly have been ready to take the field for the realization of this thought, and this, too, over and above the question of mere negotiations.

Secondly, the matter of holding the Entente conditions as capable of discussion. When Wilson recapitulates the conditions of the Entente as follows:

The Entente Powers have replied much more definitely and have stated, in general terms, indeed, but with sufficient definiteness to imply details, the arrangements, guarantees, and acts of reparation which they deem to be the indispensable conditions of a satisfactory settlement—

it means that Wilson takes notice of the fact that, so far as they are concerned, the members of the Entente will not permit these conditions to be debated. And when Wilson adds—I concede this much to Dr. Sinzheimer: the sentence can be construed as being connected with the foregoing sentence, which stated that we were ready to take part in a conference: "We are that much nearer a definite discussion of the peace which will end the present war," then I say that here is a chasm across which there is absolutely no bridge to carry us. For if there was anything in the world which made it impossible for us to come to a final discussion concerning peace, it was the proposals of the Entente and the agreements and guarantees and acts of reparation which were characterized in their note as indispensable conditions. These conditions were unacceptable so far as we were concerned. If Wilson took the view that, by the announcement of these conditions, and, still more, by the fact of their characterization as indispensable conditions, we had come any nearer to the point of peace, that in itself shows me simply this: That here was an abyss which could not be scaled. By the answer of the Entente, we were not brought nearer to peace, but, on the contrary, the gate to peace, as I pointed out yesterday and day before yesterday, was closed with reverberating violence. Wilson considered as acceptable, or at least as capable of discussion, that which was bound to be impossible of discussion, in our eyes, and which was bound to be absolutely undebatable by a Germany which was not completely overthrown. I will not push the inquiry into Mr. Wilson's mental attitude too insistently; I will not decide whether

it was ignorance or malice, or an absolutely Anglo-Saxon atmosphere which turned the scale, but the entire future German policy had to realize the fact that we were at least confronted with an absolute lack of comprehension with regard to the conditions essential to our national existence. That Wilson utterly failed to understand what the Entente conditions meant, so far as we were concerned, will be plain to you if you open the message at page 103. There you will find the following:

Fortunately, we have received very explicit assurances on this point. The statesmen of both of the groups of nations now arrayed against one another have said, in terms that could not be misinterpreted, that it was no part of the purpose they had in mind to crush their antagonists.

So that Wilson's view was that this unexampled program of disintegration and destruction on the part of the Entente was no program of disintegration and destruction. On this ground, too, I base my conclusion that Wilson, in contrast with ourselves, looked upon the conditions of the Entente as peace conditions which could be utilized.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: May I perhaps—

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Will you permit me to terminate my reply?

Now, Professor Bonn has expressed the belief that I said that the conditions of the Versailles peace were to be found even in this message to the Senate. That is undoubtedly an error. I stated that the Entente note of the 10th of November announced the peace of Versailles in advance. It is true that I made an additional statement with regard to Wilson. I said that back of this message of the 22d of January, 1917, there was already lurking the visage of the Wilson at Versailles. If you desire an explanation of what I meant, I will give it to you.

Concerning the Wilson of Versailles, it has been shown that, to him, everything that had to do with humanity, with justice, with the enjoyment of equal rights by nations, and with the self-determination of peoples—everything that he ever stated on this score, was nothing but air, so far as he was concerned. I have already called attention to the fact that an examination of Lansing in the Senate shows that Lansing has stated in so many words that the fourteen points were hardly ever mentioned at Versailles.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In what connection?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Secretary of State Lansing was asked in the Senate Committee for Foreign Affairs whether, during the negotiations in Paris, the fourteen points of the President had ever really come up for discussion; and Lansing answered: "I do not believe so." The beautiful fourteen points, upon which those of us who were big in faith depended, played, it would seem, absolutely no part at Versailles. And moreover, Dr. Sinzheimer probably knows this.

And concerning this Mr. Wilson, whose face I discerned back of the message of the 22d of January, 1917, at first somewhat indistinctly, as if hidden

by a veil, but whose features, little by little, became plainer and plainer, it is further established, as the result of questions put in the Senate committee and to which, I believe, he himself gave answer, that it was not until he had reached Paris that he was informed of the treaties involving disintegration and destruction which the members of the Entente had concluded amongst themselves. Mr. Wilson admitted that before he came to Paris he knew nothing of the treaty of London with Italy; that he did not even know of the arrangements existing between France and Russia, touching the separation of Alsace and Lorraine, of the territory of the Saar, of the left bank of the Rhine, and of the agreement with Russia concerning our eastern boundary. He states in so many words: "Before I came to Paris, I knew nothing at all of all these treaties," and this adds another feature to the countenance of the Mr. Wilson of Versailles. This apparent innocence of all European conditions, together with his hopeless Anglo-Saxon prejudices—those are the two features which characterize the countenance of Wilson and which ultimately spelled our ruin; and these were the two features of that face of Wilson which I already discerned, veiled behind the message of January, 1917.

The CHAIRMAN: His Excellency v. Romberg desires to speak. Is it in connection with this point, or with some other matter?

Expert v. ROMBERG: I had asked leave to speak in connection with a statement made by Dr. Sinzheimer, regarding the effect of the peace proposal. However, I would not like to interrupt matters at the present stage.

The CHAIRMAN: Then perhaps we can terminate with this point at present. Professor Bonn has the floor.

Expert DR. BONN: The salient point in this matter is the following: Were we justified in entertaining the hope that Wilson would bring the Allies to the conference table, or not? We hear a great deal of talk here about tactical considerations, on the basis of which we should have done thus or so. I will not go into an analysis of the character of President Wilson, for it can serve no useful purpose at this point. But I believe that it can be stated that, in purely political matters, he is a very clever tactician. If, now, he presents a matter to the Allies in this way, for the purpose of bringing them to the point of negotiations, a point which they do not desire to reach, declaring as they have that the Germans must be destroyed, he certainly ought to evoke the sympathy of those gentlemen who have always laid such stress upon tactical considerations.

The vital point in this matter is the following: The Allies had demanded Germany's destruction. On this point we certainly agree. Nor do we need to discuss the point whether the peace of Versailles took a form which accorded with these views. As opposed to this attitude, Wilson says: "There must be peace without victory." That is the essential element in all these questions. It is easily understood how it came about that he was

not instructed concerning European matters, in view of American conditions. The information which we, as a general rule, have with regard to America is not always either good or entirely free from doubt. But if we had been able to negotiate further with him, it is in all probability possible that we could have cleared up a great many matters concerning which he had no clear conception. The Wilson of Versailles, who obtained his knowledge of Poland from Mr. Paderewski, was certainly a much more difficult problem for us to face than a Wilson to whom we, too, would have been able to furnish information. And after all, back of all this is the following, that if we did not want Wilson for a mediator, and if it was our desire to eliminate him as a mediator from taking part in a conference on account of our distrust of him, that meant that we would bring him to the conference table as our opponent. In view of everything that has been said, no other prospect existed. For the break with America meant war, and if you are at war with a nation it will not do for you to say to its head: "You are ignorant and you are prejudiced; for that reason, we refuse to negotiate with you." In that case, one has to put up with his participation.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I assume, from all this, that Professor Bonn, even today, sees President Wilson's features in a different light than I do. For my part, all those beautiful phrases about peace without victory which also—if I recollect correctly—recur in the message of January, 1918, when Wilson was already our enemy, were nothing more than the coating in which was lodged the bitter pill which we were to swallow. That is the way I saw things at that time. That was in accord with my attitude. Whether I was right or not will be difficult to determine. The result speaks, I believe, not in favor of Professor Bonn, but it is my opinion, on the contrary, that the experiences which we have had with Wilson speak in favor of my view.

The CHAIRMAN: Here in this hall, your Excellency yourself warned the budget committee against involving ourselves in war with the United States, because in such case America would naturally adopt as her own the conditions of our enemies. You stated in the session of the 29th of September:

There can be no doubt whatsoever that in such case, and in reference to the war aims, America would range herself completely upon England's side.

So that at that time, you yourself recognized fully that at the moment when the United States became involved in war with us, it would naturally follow that the United States would make our enemies' war aims her own. What I mean is that at that time you foresaw perfectly clearly what was bound to happen at the moment when we became involved in war with the United States. So that was a matter which not only applied to the 29th of September, 1916, but was, as a matter of fact, bound to be equally applicable to subsequent periods of time.

Then you further stated that Wilson's note, in fact, already revealed the

features of the Wilson at Versailles. But there are certainly numbers and numbers of people, who could lay claim to a certain reputation in connection with diplomacy, who took a diametrically opposite attitude. I remember that, in the first place, a great part of the public opinion expressed this view, even in the German press, and that, above all, not only did Count Czernin consider that Wilson's message constituted a working basis which could most certainly be utilized, but one who was very skeptically inclined, the Hungarian premier, Count Tisza, expressed himself as extraordinarily pleased with this message of Wilson, and saw in it a good foundation for further negotiations. Now these people are authorities of such weight among our allies that we can not escape the effect of the judgment which they entertained.

And I further call to your attention that as well-known a man as Max Warburg, a man of such importance in the international banking business, held the same view with regard to Wilson's message, and considered our reply thereto in the nature of a kick. Now these constitute certainly quite a considerable number of authorities who reached a materially different conclusion with regard to the President's message.

But do you, too, not take the view that if this message contained exactly what you attribute to it; if it even at that time bore the earmarks of the treaty of Versailles and contained the germs of everything which actually appeared in connection with this peace—you did not state this definitely; you said this with regard to the Entente note, but you did say: "Behind this I already saw Wilson's features," which amounts to saying that you already foresaw these conditions—how can we then explain the fact that the then Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg himself considered this message to be of such importance as to make, on his part, the attempt to have the U-boat war postponed in order to be enabled to carry on further negotiations? To have, if I may say so, our U-boats piped back—an event which, as we have heard, was not held practicable, for technical reasons? My idea was that you had expressed yourself clearly to the effect that you were in absolute accord with the Imperial Chancellor. Do we not find a crass contradiction existing right at this point between your ideas and those of the Imperial Chancellor, who was of the opinion that this very message furnished a basis for further negotiations, and that, for that reason, it would have been desirable to have called off the U-boat war at once?

(Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: That is a mistake, that is the letter of the 29th of January.)

—Well, in any event, the message had gone out, and in spite of the impression received, the then Imperial Chancellor would, at any rate, have still been willing to take up the offer of peace mediation. And I can only say that, according to my recollection of those times, the Austrian and Hungarian press announced themselves in full agreement with this view.

And I am also of the opinion that the construction which you have put upon the words "united Poland"—we ourselves had announced the restoration of Poland a few weeks before, which means that we announced the principle—

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: "United" Poland.)

Yes, I have just recently called attention to the fact, your Excellency, that we were always accustomed, even before the war, to speak of a "united Germany" and in so doing, by no manner of means intended, by this united Germany, the inclusion of all Germans in Austria and in Switzerland; not a soul had such a thought.

Now, again: The words "every great people . . . should" have an independent outlet to the sea, are after all not so directly connected with the Polish question in Wilson's message, for a number of general comments are interspersed between—

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: But it doubtless had reference also to Poland.)

Of course it could be applied to Poland, but it could be applied to Serbia just as well; it was the announcement of a general principle.

And then, too, the term "should"—anyone who is an old parliamentarian certainly knows the difference between "should" and "shall"—is not phrased exactly enough to call for an unconditional interpretation. Now we have heard that even one so well acquainted with President Wilson as Count Bernstorff has said that, as a matter of fact, President Wilson was not sufficiently informed with regard to Polish conditions to make positive propositions in connection with this subject logically worked out in advance. Could not this free access to the sea have been reached—or are you not of this opinion?—in this way: in having, for instance, the Vistula, let me say, subjected to rules and regulations of international commerce along the lines of the Rhine Regulations applying to shipping traffic—the Vistula on the one hand, let me say, like the lower Danube, on the basis of the Danube shipping traffic acts? And was there not, too, the possibility of having certain railroads made the subject of international guarantees by which definite agreements as to tariff, etc., should be reached, thereby guaranteeing Polish traffic in the premises? In this connection, which would include such neutralization, there would have been, in all probability no need for a corridor such as was later on demanded. So are you not of the opinion that a different interpretation was possible, and that if the demand concerning a united Poland and the self-determination of peoples was to be interpreted as you have construed it, that Austria-Hungary, above all, would have been bound to submit objections of a far more insistent nature, even in the Polish question, than we, who of course were much more of a united state than she? I should like to ask you, therefore, to give your views on this point.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Well, gentlemen, in regard to such difficult questions as these, there are always differences of opinion; and that Wilson's

message has been subjected to varying interpretations is a matter which is known to all the world. But unfortunately, it always happens that only one of the opinions is the correct one, and the sad fact is that my estimate of Wilson is the one which has been proved to be right. I am not trying to show that my judgment is right *ex post facto*; Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg can confirm this. By referring to Gerard's book, you will find indications which point to the fact that Mr. v. Bethmann was not at such very great odds with me in the estimate placed upon the message to the Senate; and the whole pity of the thing is that this opinion has been shown to be correct.

The CHAIRMAN: You already prophesied that on the 29th, in case war should ensue.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: We are discussing Wilson today as if we had but a confused picture of him, whereas he is very sharply outlined. The chairman says that on the 29th Mr. v. Bethmann would have made another attempt. Mr. v. Bethmann will confirm the fact that at that time I was more skeptical than he himself. Of course, Mr. v. Bethmann himself was by no means convinced that peace was about to come to us, but in the exercise of that great conscientiousness of his, which, I believe, is recognized throughout the entire world, he was willing to grasp at the last straw which, by any possibility, would promote the cause of peace. He himself will probably have something to say about it. For this reason, there is no necessity for me to go into this point in any greater detail. I also took the view that even though the chance that we could really accomplish something was quite insignificant, we should so act that we could not be reproached at a later time with not having tried everything. But I was all the more skeptical in view of the fact that I was absolutely convinced that at that time Wilson already knew that we were launching the U-boat war on the 1st of February so that, consequently, there was some trick of some kind in the whole arrangement; there was something unknown in the whole affair which it was impossible for us to see from here.

I was right in being skeptical. I regret that I find myself bound to repeat what I have already recently stated, to wit: If Wilson had been in earnest in his desire to bring about peace, he would have been bound to have accepted the hand which we held out to him, even if he had held but half a hand or a little finger in his grasp; it should not have been asking too much of him to have him clasp this little finger. If Wilson had desired to bring about peace, it would not have been too much to expect of him to at least have received Count Bernstorff once more, and to have said to him: "If you would only add one step more to those which you have taken—that is, if, without awaiting the results of my efforts, you would only call back your U-boats, relying upon my bare promise that I will do all that I can to bring about peace and, moreover, a peace such as will be acceptable to you!" If

I had been Wilson and had wanted to bring about peace, that step would not have been too much for me.

But in connection with these things, we are constantly going off into discussions which, I fear, can not be of much assistance in expediting the matter which we have before us. For that reason, if the Chairman will permit it, I will revert to the answering of some definite questions.

The CHAIRMAN: In this connection, I should simply like to remark that these discussions have been brought on by you yourself and by your statements.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: My view is that, as a result of the questions which are put to me, I am constantly being placed in a position of repeating things which I have already said. But if you will permit it, I should like to take up certain more definite points.

You state, Mr. Chairman, that at that time, in October, I had recognized the fact that if we launched the U-boat war, America would take part in the war against us and range herself in the war on the side of our enemies. That is true. But what I recognized as the fact after October and, indeed, exactly at the time when the decision was being reached, when I had to meet the question of my own personal attitude with regard to the decision, and still later, particularly at the time of the message of the 22d and in connection with Wilson's attitude toward our telegram of the 29th, which he did not even consider worth replying to, my conviction was that Wilson would, in the end, range himself on the side of our enemies, even if no U-boat war were launched, and that he would adopt the war aims of our enemies.

And further, our experiences with Wilson continued: I then recognized the further fact that Wilson, even as an enemy of Germany, almost a year after the United States had broken off relations with us and had declared war upon us, was still using the same beautiful phrases with regard to a league of nations, the equal rights of nations, and a peace without victory or vanquished—even as our enemy!—and that this enemy of ours, Wilson, who still continued to make these beautiful speeches in which, too, the fourteen points were mentioned, when we reached out for what he promised, when we stretched out our hand to it, left us—you will pardon the harsh term—miserably in the lurch; as Lansing was bound to state, there was hardly a word said at Versailles about the fourteen points. So that, too, belongs in the picture.

So I came to recognize, too, that Wilson was continuing with his beautiful speeches, even as our enemy, and that he had no intention whatsoever of bringing to pass the promises which he made.

Now the Chairman has called our attention to the Polish matter. The word which struck me most strongly in this connection is the word “united” or “unified” Poland. When we speak of a “united” Germany, we naturally refer to a domestic state of unity. For we are Germans, and when we

speak of ourselves, it is our own internal affair. But when the President of the great nation over there on the other side of the water talks about a "unified Poland," then we have something very different. That is not his own domestic concern, but in that case the matter is being looked at from the outside. I do not assume that anyone will believe that in the discussions with regard to the Polish matter, a "united Poland" has ever been taken to mean anything else than the unification of Congress Poland, of Prussian Poland and of Austrian Poland. For slight as may have been the conception that Wilson had of our concrete conditions for the moment, he was, after all, a bit of a professor of history and in all probability he must sometime or other have come across some casual reference to the partition of Poland. (Laughter.)

And now when Mr. Gothein places further reliance on the fact that the word "should" is found in the fourteen points, then I must say: "What terrible experiences we have had with this word 'should'!" So far as I know, at the beginning of October, 1918, the word "should" was made the subject of philological research in connection with the fourteen points before we delivered ourselves into Mr. Wilson's hands by our disastrous application for an armistice. At that time, philological discussions arose in connection with "could" and "should" and "must," and similar terms. And all the fourteen points were nothing to Mr. Wilson; he did not even mention them at Versailles.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, permit me to say one thing. There are certain facts which, in my opinion, must be recognized as such. In the first place, Colonel House informed Count Bernstorff in so many words that Wilson—in the telegram which immediately followed the message to the Senate—would not intervene in territorial questions. In the message to the Senate itself, in connection with the discussion of the Polish problem, the right of international minorities was expressly protected, a right which, so far as it was concerned, could only relate to Poles who were living in foreign German territory—

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Or Germans in Poland.)

—As you please; but what is of much greater importance are the following four points. In the first place, this one to wit, that, just as you correctly concede, the Entente note was a note dictated by conquerors. The conditions could only be complied with after Germany was completely vanquished. The President said that only a peace without victory is such as to carry with it guarantees of permanence, and that every other peace is a menace to peace itself.

Furthermore, you stated, with absolute correctness, that the Entente note insulted the honor of the German people in denying the fact that they were entitled to equal rights. In his message to the Senate, Wilson says expressly that only a peace between equals can be of any permanence, and

that only nations exercising equal rights can and should be permitted to conclude peace. So that, in this way, he rejects two material factors, fundamental factors of the Entente note, in express terms, to wit, victory and the denial that Germany is entitled to equal rights.

But furthermore, the Imperial Chancellor made a great speech in November, in which he took up the matter of Sir Edward Grey's address, in which Edward Grey demanded courts of arbitration and disarmament on land. At that time, the Imperial Chancellor went deeply into this fundamental conception, and he added that we would welcome everything which could lead to a system of arbitral courts, and he would support it. But the limitation of armament on land necessarily includes a limitation of armament at sea. An equality of treatment as between England and Germany is involved in this question. Moreover, the Imperial Chancellor, in this great speech, and, as a matter of fact, the German Empire continuously, and before the speech was ever made, had put forward as a fundamental requisite the freedom of the seas. Wilson's attitude is in absolute accord with both these demands. He insists that the principle of the freedom of the seas be invoked both by England and against her; and he makes almost literal use of the expressions of the Imperial Chancellor when he says "We must limit naval armament also." The question of armament, whether at sea or on land, is the question which is most directly and most vitally involved in the future fate of nations and in that of the human race: the limitation of naval armament against England on the ocean, and of armament on land against Germany. So that the fact is that in the message, two fundamental demands, two fundamental points of departure directed against us by the Entente were rejected, whereas two fundamental principles involved in the idea of concluding peace which we had already announced were accepted by Wilson literally and in detail.

Now you can say that this was but pretense, that it was deceit and done simply for the sake of appearances. Look at the peace of Versailles. But in this connection, you must be confronted with that point with which the Chairman has confronted you. At that time, you yourself took the stand that if America entered the war it would be upon the side of our enemies; and, so far as concerns the bringing about of a peace where the conqueror on the one side confronts the beaten foe on the other—why, that presents a condition wholly different from the military situation where no country and no nation occupies the place of conqueror. For this reason, Wilson was in quite a different position before he entered the war from what he was after he entered it.

In this connection, I should like to request one thing of you. I may well venture to add that, in the course of your remarks, your Excellency, you have spoken in very great detail and with great emphasis with regard to many matters. But you have not touched upon a question which goes to

the root of things, and which Count Bernstorff, basically speaking, has taken for the foundation of his representations. Count Bernstorff has summed up in short and clear form, and in a phrase which goes to the essence of the matter, the policy which, in his opinion, was the right policy to follow. It may be expressed more or less in these terms: "I was convinced of the fact that, without the assistance of the United States, the Entente would never defeat us. I was convinced of the fact that this catastrophe would occur if the United States stepped over to the side of the Entente. It was for this reason that the Entente sought to bring the United States into the war. It was for this reason that our policy, as I understood it, had for its purpose that of keeping the United States out of the war. If America had not entered the war, the Entente would have been obliged to conclude a peace of understanding because, without the help of America, she would not have been able to win." That is a clear, open statement. I should like to ask you to state your view with regard to this fundamental question—this fundamental point of view; for it is certain that this goes to the basic question which is before us here. So that I ask, first of all—forgive me if I have diverged somewhat—that you answer the one question as to Wilson's attitude with regard to those features of our peace policy which have been brought out; and, secondly, what is your attitude with regard to the fundamental conception of the whole political situation as it has been put in that short, clear, and simple summing-up by Count v. Bernstorff? It is possible that this might lead to an interchange of views between you and Count Bernstorff touching the whole fundamental question and the basic ground of the entire war policy as it affected the United States and the peace of understanding.

The CHAIRMAN: I would simply like to make brief reference to another point. So far as concerns Wilson, Professor of History, Professor Wilson probably knows that, once upon a time, there was a greater Germany and not only a small Germany, and that this small Germany only came into being after 1866. So that that fact has, in my opinion, exactly the same bearing with regard to the united Poland as the bearing which Professor Wilson's knowledge of Poland would have to have with regard to Germany.

Now I should like to put a still further question: Your Excellency has stated that Wilson would have entered the war even though no U-boat war had been launched. Have you any positive grounds for your belief, beyond the later statement which was made in the Senate during the last year?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I should like, first of all, to come back to the question of Poland. Mr. Gothein says that, in his capacity as professor of history, Wilson must have known beyond doubt that at an earlier stage a great Germany existed and that, since 1866, we have had a smaller Germany, flanked by Austria and German Switzerland, etc. Mr. Gothein is absolutely correct. But he has overlooked one important point. President Wilson

has undoubtedly spoken of a united Poland, but he has never mentioned a united Germany.

(Interruption: That was not necessary, either.)

Well, in that case, I am in no position to state what his idea of a united Germany was.

The CHAIRMAN: That is a very marked misunderstanding.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Nor do I understand it.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I did not understand it either.

Therefore I come to my next point. Even Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer, Professor Dr. Bonn, and Count Bernstorff, all of which gentlemen have an opinion of Wilson different from my own, will admit that his message of the 22d of January was *per se* inconsistent, just as was the case with his later message involving the fourteen points—of January, 1918, I believe. For it is true; he speaks of peace without victory; he speaks of equal rights among nations; and he tells us that nobody ought to be annihilated; but in the same message he treats the objects which the Entente announce as their own as being debatable, and states—this is on page 103 of the volume: That the statements of both of the groups of people now arrayed against each other—and the joint note of the Entente of the 10th of December also belongs to this declaration—that these announcements establish, in a way that it is impossible to misunderstand, that it is not their purpose to annihilate their opponents. So that Wilson interpreted the joint note of our opponents of the 10th of January, 1917, which obviously announced the most unheard-of aims selected for our destruction, as voicing “a purpose which was not to be misunderstood” on the part of the Entente not to destroy us.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: It was stated in the note of the Entente, in so many words, that the Allies did not harbor the intention of destroying Germany or Austria; and then it is that Wilson comes out with his criticism of this sentence, if you will be good enough to read on further.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: “It may perhaps not be equally clear to all as to what this announcement involves. The conception may not be the same on both sides of the water” etc., etc. According to this, the fact remains that that which we looked upon as annihilation, annihilation pure and simple, was not considered by Wilson as a victory of annihilation.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Where is that to be found?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Mr. Wilson said that the Entente announced its purpose not to destroy its opponents “in terms which were not to be misunderstood.” We were of the opinion that the Entente note expressed the purpose, in terms which were not to be misunderstood, of annihilating us. Further on in Wilson’s message, it is announced that the Entente’s aims, which were bent on our destruction, had brought us so much nearer to the discussion of peace. In any event, that is my interpretation. If our

interpretations continue to differ, all that we can establish is the fact that our interpretations do differ. But with no application of the dialectic art, Dr. Sinzheimer, will you succeed in making me change my opinion. And I admit, without further argument, that the same is true with regard to yourself.

So that in Wilson's message I discern the same inconsistencies as exist in his later announcements. Just take the analogy which the message of January, 1918, with its fourteen points, bears to what Wilson understood it to mean in Versailles. The message of the fourteen points was the message sent by Wilson at war. So that it follows that the message sent by Wilson when at war still voiced the principle of peace without victory and without aims involving annihilation. At that time, no new factor intervened, for war had already come. The treaty of Versailles is the one authentic document which shows us how Wilson interpreted this peace without conquest, this self-determination of peoples, this equal rights amongst nations, and all the rest of it.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In quite a different situation.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: In a situation which was exactly, in January, 1918, as it existed later. But I see that we can get no further on this point. The one thing that I can request is that you will admit to me that to the extent that the government shared my view at that time, you will do the then government the justice of conceding that it was thus that it looked upon Wilson's message, and had good reason to interpret it in this way. If you will read the matter up in Gerard's book—I haven't it with me today—you will find therein mentioned the occasion when Gerard was last received by the Imperial Chancellor. On that occasion, too, the Imperial Chancellor called attention to the Polish question, stating that the President had made his announcement concerning a united Poland in his message to the Senate, and that the President looked upon the war aims of the Entente, which were utterly unacceptable to us, as forming the basis of peace negotiations. So that the only thing which can be absolutely established is, after all, that that was the meaning as we understood it at that time.

Now, Mr. Gothein has put the further question as to whether, in addition to the dialogue between McCumber and Wilson, I had other reasons to believe that the United States would have entered the war against us, even if there had been no U-boat war. I certainly have such reasons. If Mr. Gothein has read the last section of the second volume of my book—at that time, I had no knowledge whatsoever of McCumber, and even then I expressed the view that the United States would have entered the war against us without the launching of the U-boat war. So far as the conversation between McCumber and Wilson was concerned, it was merely a confirmation of my point of view; and my assumption was based on the following: First, my general observation of the manner in which the United

States practiced neutrality and of the constant edging-over of the United States to the side of the Entente. In the second place, it was based upon certain statements which Wilson made. In October, 1916, Wilson made a speech in which, even at that time, he called attention to the fact that the time for neutrality would soon be gone and that, if the war were to continue longer, then there was nothing that might not happen. I can not remember the literal terms, but in any event the impression created was that "if the war lasts longer, we shall be forced into the war." In the third place, on the introduction of Wilson's peace note of the 21st of December; in this you will find the same thing stated, to wit, that the war had taken on proportions which would force the United States, if the war were to last longer, to adopt the measures necessary for safeguarding its interests. Fourthly, on Lansing's announcement to the newspaper men on December 21, which occasioned nothing short of a panic in the United States and gave the impression that America was absolutely on the verge of war, and which Lansing was obliged to qualify in the afternoon, at Wilson's bidding; but the statement had been made. And, fifthly, I refer you to the statement made by Count Bernstorff when I asked him yesterday: "If America was facing war as, with the continuation of the war, was, in view of all these statements, bound to seem not only possible but probable, do you believe that there was the slightest possibility of America entering the war against the Entente and not against us?" To this question, Count v. Bernstorff replied: "War with the Entente was, of course, absolutely out of the question. When war talk came up in the United States, war with Germany was what was always meant." I believe that those are, in a word, all reasons which would appear to indicate that the idea was not so wholly out of the way that, if we had refrained from launching the U-boat war and, in doing so, ignored what had been announced by the supreme military leaders as a *sine qua non*, we should have been left with nothing but the choice either, to all intents and purposes, of swallowing the Entente's conditions whole, or of defending ourselves further against the determination of the Entente to continue with the war, and then experience having the United States go over to the camp of our enemies, perhaps on the basis—and I repeat this phrase for the third time—of a Wilson mediation brought about by the butt of his rifle. It is quite possible that Wilson would have said to us: "If you do not accept the united Poland, if you do not subject the Vistula to international control, if you do not agree to a plebescite in Alsace-Lorraine, and if you do not do this or that, then, in view of the fact that the termination of the war is a matter of vital interest to the United States, I shall be forced to join the Entente in the war which is being carried on against you." These were possibilities, and I go so far as to believe that they were probabilities with which we should have had to reckon very seriously at the end of January, 1917.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency has relied upon the statement of Count

v. Bernstorff, to the effect that he, too, was convinced that if the war continued America would go over to the side of our enemies, even though the U-boat war was not launched. It would be expedient for Count v. Bernstorff to express himself on this point.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I believe that Dr. Helfferich did not say that at all.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I did not say that. I said that my opinion was that, even if the U-boat war were discontinued, the United States would have entered the war against us.

The CHAIRMAN: I just now asked you whether you had definite reasons for your belief. You have mentioned a number of such reasons. I should now like to ask Count v. Bernstorff whether he, too, is convinced that, if, granting that we had not launched the unrestricted U-boat war at that time, but if the war had, however, continued because the Entente would have nothing to do with our peace proposal, as was the case, America would in such case have entered the war against us. As I understood Count Bernstorff's statement, he is of the opinion that Wilson would in such case have exerted a notable pressure upon the Entente in order to bring them to the point of negotiating. If you please, your Excellency!

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I should like to state, first of all, that here and, particularly in the case of the public, a very great weight appears to have been attributed to the circumstance that my estimation of Wilson's character is quite different, for instance, from that of the witness and many others. I am of the opinion that we are not so very much concerned with judgments rendered on Wilson's character. I knew just as well as the gentlemen here, that Wilson's attitude toward us was distinctly not a friendly attitude. And I knew just as well as they that public opinion in the United States was not friendly so far as we were concerned. I struggled with myself for two and a third years, day and night, over the matter of this recognition of mine of the circumstance that this unfriendliness existed. The only difference between my attitude and that of the witness is with regard to the method by which we were to oppose this unfriendly attitude. I was of the opinion that there was just one single possibility of keeping the United States out of the war, and that was for us to accept mediation in the interests of peace at the hand of the United States, and that in such case the United States would in no event be able to do us any harm. For if we had accepted peace mediation through Wilson, Mr. Wilson would, under no circumstances, have brought the people of the United States to the point of making war upon us. That is the view which I entertain on the subject. He simply would have been utterly powerless to do so, even if he had been the biggest German-hater in the world.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Let me add another word on this point. Very great weight is constantly attributed to the fact (and by you, too,

your Excellency) that Wilson stated that he would have gone to war with Germany even without the unrestricted U-boat war. Fundamentally speaking, that constitutes no new announcement, a point which you have just emphasized; he let that be understood during the war, on numerous occasions, and this is shown in Count v. Bernstorff's reports, according to which Lansing once said to him that America's situation was becoming intolerable and would lead to war in some way or other. So that was a fact which was already known. But now I should like to ask you: After all, that was really a very strong argument on behalf of the proposition that America had a vital interest in bringing about peace mediation. I assume, of course, that the leaders and the chiefs of a people are willing to do all possible in order to avoid war. So that if Wilson noted that the feeling in favor of war was growing, he looked upon the peace mediation as a means adapted to serve the vital interests of the United States, whereby peace and the avoidance of war could be brought about. So that all this is a strong argument in behalf of the proposition that Wilson considered it right to exert himself on behalf of peace mediation, not basing his action on general principles of justice, but on the need of serving specific American interests. If this is the case, we are bound all the more to believe in the genuineness of Wilson's intention to bring about peace by mediation. I should like to have your opinion on this point.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I will give it to you. To the extent that Wilson's peace move was expressed in his note of the 21st of December, it was not rejected by us. We had simply chosen a different method from that which Wilson very probably contemplated; and this was a course of action which Wilson had left open to us in so many words. Wilson's peace mediation was rejected by the Entente. For if I refuse to be treated, in connection with another party, as one of two parties entitled to mutually equal rights, this means that any mediation and any suggestion of good offices is rejected. In any event, we were bound to interpret the matter thus. After this rejection of Wilson's peace mediation, we were confronted with the question of whether Wilson would force the Entente, which had rejected mediation by him in the interests of peace on the 10th of January, to accept mediation by him, say, on the 10th of February. And of this there was absolutely no prospect. There would only have been some prospect of this if one contingency had occurred.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The message to the Senate of the 22d of January, in spite of the rejected peace!

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The message to the Senate only went so far as to talk around the subject once more, but, I believe, mentioned no mediation, and, on the contrary, was, in the main, concerned with the world as Wilson visualized it for the future. The question of mediation was not expressly mentioned in the message to the Senate.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But a step in the direction of peace!

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The question of mediation is not expressly mentioned. Wilson did not state, in the message to the Senate, what he wished to do with the question of peace mediation—whether he wanted to continue with it, take it up again, or let it drop. As I recollect the message to the Senate, it has nothing to do with all that; in the main, the message to the Senate is a program laid out for the future, relating to the future world in its improved state, the existence of which Mr. Wilson announced in this message and which, the more is the pity, did not come into being. It refers to the peace question but seldom, and if we eliminate the general phrasing dealing with peace without victory, etc., and pass to those passages where something more concrete was said, such as those dealing with the Polish question, it was unacceptable so far as we were concerned. I still believe today that, as a matter of fact, there was but one chance for a peace mediation by Wilson, and this was an understanding to be reached between Wilson and the Entente concerning the principles of a peace such as would be satisfactory to the Entente, the assumption of the attitude of mediator by Wilson in favor of the conditions of the Entente, the ultimate purpose of which would have been the exertion of pressure upon Germany for the purpose of forcing Germany to accept peace conditionally. That is the way I analyzed the matter.

Expert DR. BONN: The whole message of the 22d of January had, after all, in virtue of everything that went before, but the one purpose of having Wilson get the support of American public opinion in order to take further steps. He says, in so many words, that that was the reason why he was addressing the Senate. As a matter of fact, it would have been much easier for him to say: "I have made my attempt, and now the matter is closed; the Entente has said 'Never!'—so the episode is closed." But he picks up the threads of peace once more, and does so, moreover, as the further telegrams show us, and as a passage in Gerard's book shows us, with the intention of exerting pressure. Unless he exerted pressure against the Allies—on this point, we are perfectly clear—

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: If he had only exerted it!

Expert DR. BONN:—the matter was absolutely hopeless. You are putting a question to me, an answer to which would be just as devoid of evidential effect as in the case of most of the questions which we have mutually put; for it is naturally easy to construct the Wilson of the year 1917 on the basis of the peace of Versailles. The reverse process is more difficult.

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: My book!)

At this point we are not concerning ourselves simply with your book, but with the statements which have been made here. It is not incumbent upon me to discuss your book here. If we consider everything which we were at that time justified in assuming, and which we heard, Wilson was ready at

that time and he certainly had the means of pressure. When he stated, in the year 1916, to the Imperial Government, that he could not put an end to the blockade because the interests had assumed too great dimensions, the fact is that at that time a condition of affairs had developed which he could not venture to challenge. Count Bernstorff has already told us about that. In the autumn of 1916 and at the commencement of 1917, things were quite different. At that time, public opinion in the United States had become much more friendly toward Germany. Press reports of the 12th of December, if I recollect correctly, will be found in the records which deal with this point, which, consequently, do not consist of assumptions or recollections on our part, but of detailed extracts from American journals. Above all, matters had come to such a point at that time that the American population had become bitter about the rise in prices; the harvest had been bad, and people no longer wanted to send great masses of American goods to foreign countries, to the belligerent States. That was one thing.

The second point was that the financial situation of the Allies had become such that they could continue to manage no longer without American credits. This was a fact which Bonar Law, the British Secretary of the Treasury, admitted later quite frankly in the British lower house. The credits given the Allies by the Americans had never been so very great—they were far overestimated here—in comparison with the Allies' needs.

(Interruption by DR. HELFFERICH.)

I believe that we shall be able to agree fully on this point. The Federal Reserve Board—you knew about this—had already taken steps. At that time, Wilson would only have had to have put a restriction upon credits in order to create a deep impression. According to the impression entertained at that time—and these were the impressions of leading Americans inclined to the Allied cause—he was ready to consider this step. I myself remember, and I believe that your Excellency, also, received reports on this subject, that, shortly before the breaking-off of relations and before the entrance of the United States into the war, American bankers who were pro-Ally took part in very friendly interviews with German representatives on the subject of standing back of a German peace loan. For at that time the conviction was already entertained that things would come to an end shortly. Of course, we can not prove that matters which did not come about would have come about. I readily understand—and it seems to me that this is the result of our present proceeding—that the impression which prevailed here with regard to the American situation was quite different from that which the responsible representatives of the German government had in the United States, and that it was for this reason that the mutual lack of understanding occurred.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Count v. Bernstorff made an announcement today which seems to me to be of the greatest importance.

He stated that he was convinced that the only way of keeping the United States from entering the war against Germany would have been for us to accept the United States as a peace mediator on our behalf. I believe that this conviction of Count v. Bernstorff is absolutely correct. It is absolutely in harmony with the interview of Secretary of State Lansing, which has already been made the subject of frequent mention—an interview in which Lansing said that America was constantly approaching war. This conviction is in full accord with the cross-examination which has likewise been mentioned, to which President Wilson was subjected in August of this year, in the Senate or before Congress, a cross-examination in which he gave as his opinion that he would have entered the war against Germany, even if we had launched no U-boat war. For he would only have been able to avoid war with Germany, and believed that he could only have avoided war with Germany, if he had mediated on behalf of peace. So that, speaking now in retrospect, we are undoubtedly justified in saying that if, at that time, we had delivered ourselves into President Wilson's hands—and that is what it meant—

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, Count Bernstorff's statements were somewhat to a different effect.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe, nevertheless—and Count Bernstorff supports me; he is sitting beside me—that I have repeated his remarks correctly; perhaps this question can be put to me later. It is very difficult, indeed, to spin the thread of thought correctly if one is interrupted. But I should like to add that Count Bernstorff has just informed me that I have repeated the sense of his words correctly. Whether I gave the exact phrasing of his words correctly seems to me to be a side issue, just as, generally speaking, it seems to me that it is a side issue of these great war questions to attribute excessive weight to the terminology of a single telegram or of a single memorandum. We are not interested in matters of mere phraseology.

I shall now continue with the development of the statement which I recently started to give you. It is an undoubted fact that, viewing the matter in retrospect at this time, we would have been better off if, at that time, we had delivered ourselves into President Wilson's hands and had accepted his peace mediation, although—and I should like to emphasize this—the fact that the United States entered the war did not, in my opinion, make it inevitable that we should have reached the point of a peace of Versailles. But what was the situation at that time? Now if we had delivered ourselves into President Wilson's hands, we would have been facing a President who, according to his own statements, and according to the information given us by Count Bernstorff today, was not amicably disposed toward us; a President to whom Senator Stone—Dr. Helfferich gave us the facts yesterday—presented in the Senate twenty charges of

great weight, based upon his unneutral and unfriendly attitude towards Germany; we would have been faced with a President who informed Count Bernstorff at once upon receipt of our *Sussex* note, that he could do nothing against England and that the business interests of his country were opposed to such a step. Those are the actual factors which existed. I have no desire to take part in the battle for Wilson's soul, which has been fought out here. I would not belong in the ranks of those who, in this conflict, set themselves up as advocates for Wilson.

Now then, confronted as we would have been with the actual factors, could we have assumed that Wilson, even if he had wanted to do so, would have been able to persuade the Entente to adopt peace terms which the German people would have found acceptable, in view of the military situation which existed at that time? If we had accepted President Wilson as our advocate, why, we would of course have been bound to accept all the peace conditions of the Entente which he submitted to us. For we were in his hands—

(Interruption: How so?)

—Why, we could not have said that we would have rejected these conditions; that would have meant the renewal of the war with the Entente and with the United States, and this the German people would not have been able to do. It is obvious that they would not have been able to do so. We would then have been completely in President Wilson's power; I repeat: The experience of the Versailles peace would make it appear that even such a peace would have been preferable. But could we—and that was the fundamental question with which we were confronted at that time, at the close of January—could we, under those conditions, put ourselves in Wilson's power to that extent? I considered it out of the question. If you look upon it as a mistake, reach your judgment and condemn me on account of it. I considered it out of the question.

In this connection, I should like to put the question again: In our telegram of the 30th of January, we desired to furnish ourselves with a certain kind of guarantee against impossible peace conditions submitted by the Entente, and this by means of a peace brought about by Wilson. The telegram was to this effect: That we would desist from carrying on the U-boat war immediately if the President should furnish us with any real assurance that we could reach a peace which would be acceptable to us. And in this connection, I put the question—it has already been put by various gentlemen, and by his Excellency Helfferich too: Was President Wilson really desirous, at the bottom of his heart, and was it his political intent to restore a peace to the world, a peace in accordance with the high aims which even afterwards, after he had declared war upon us, he held out to the world? Was he willing to provide us with such a peace? If he was, what stood in the way of his at least answering the telegram of the 30th of January, and

saying to us, "Certainly, here you have your assurance, I am your mediator for purposes of peace; the Entente is ready to negotiate. Stop the U-boat war at once—at once!" It is true that we have heard a formula given by Professor Bonn and by Count Bernstorff, bearing on what our answer of the 30th of January should have communicated. We should have at once announced to England that we would summon the U-boats back, that it was possible that a misfortune would occur, but not to hold it against us if it did, for we would summon them back.

Well now, what advantage would this answer have had, as a matter of fact, over the answer which we gave? If Wilson had said, upon receipt of our answer on the 30th of January: "Certainly, the Entente will negotiate, I will be your intermediary on behalf of peace; kindly call off the U-boat war"—then the U-boat war would have perhaps lasted two or three days longer (involving, as this would, danger to American citizens) than would have been the case if we had given Wilson the reply which the two gentlemen proposed. What gigantic difference exists? But President Wilson thought so little of our answer of the 30th of January that he simply made no reply at all to it.

Was the feeling—of course, I do not expect that the opposite party will do anything that it can not do at the time, psychologically speaking—but was the feeling, was public opinion in the United States of such a kind—I assume this, otherwise Wilson would not have done it—that President Wilson was forced to break off relations at once without giving us any answer? If this was the case, then there was no question of the existence of any such pro-German feeling as that of which Professor Bonn has just spoken and which is supposed to have developed at that time. But on the contrary, the feeling in the United States was such that President Wilson would not even have succeeded by making the announcement that "the Germans, after I have stated to them that I am willing to be their mediator, will immediately desist from the U-boat war," but on the contrary, public opinion would have said: "It is a slap in the face for Wilson, and you must reply to it by breaking off relations."

So that I ask those who are inclined, in our present proceedings and conferences, and in the question which they are bringing home to us, whether or not we have acted in absolute error, to come to a final conclusion justifying the policy of Wilson as it is not considered justified even in the United States, taking public opinion as a whole—I would, I say, after all, request even those gentlemen who take that stand to give these factors their just due, the factors which I have just ventured to set out to you and which, after all, may be such as to call for a different criterion in passing upon the question of the German policy, than that which has been frequently applied up to this time.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to state, in reply to the last statement of

Dr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, that the circumstance that expressions or lines of thought have been made here by anyone which suggested that a justification of Wilson was contemplated, is a matter of which, up to the present time, I have not been conscious. I have merely understood all these statements to have been made with the purpose of establishing whatever possibilities existed and, if any did exist, whether there were any which were not taken advantage of. So far as I know, any justification of Wilson's policy has, up to the time, not been undertaken by any witness or by any member of the committee, and I can not assume the existence of a purpose to do so.

I should like to suggest at this point, that we adjourn and that, if it is not asking too much of the witnesses, we continue today at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: May I suggest 4:30? I have important engagements to meet, which have a claim upon me.

The CHAIRMAN: Then the next session will take place at 4:30 sharp. The session is closed.

The session closed at 1:44 o'clock.

The session was reopened at 4:40 o'clock by the Chairman, Delegate Gothein.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, the session is opened.

I do not know whether anyone desires to take up the matter of the last statements made by his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg. For the present, I believe Mr. v. Romberg has asked for leave to speak.

Expert v. ROMBERG: I should like to say a word with regard to the question which the recorder put, whether or not the German Government should have adopted tactics whose purpose was to make our opponents more inclined to peace, through an attitude of conciliation on our part; that is to say, by means of disclosing war aims involving concessions and, by so doing, to support the friends of peace in enemy countries, and, on the other hand, to weaken the attitude of those in enemy countries who were calling for war.

In this connection, the recorder calls particular attention to a report from Berne, according to which exception was taken abroad to the unfavorable effects of the Emperor's speech at Mülhausen. Of course, the question of whether we could have won over our opponents by an attitude of conciliation or by a disclosure of our war aims, was a matter which played a very important part in the reports sent in by our representatives in foreign countries and, above all, in the deliberations of the home office. It was naturally incumbent upon us to make the effort to come to the support of the friends of peace in foreign countries. Basing my statement upon my numerous

experiences in this line, I can only say that all attempts which were made to pursue the policy recommended by Dr. Sinzheimer met with extraordinarily unfavorable results. I can do no more than concede that Dr. Helfferich was right when he said that even the attempt which was made in the form of the peace proposal led to a favorable [*sic*] result, and that the working out of this peace proposal was not exactly such as to encourage further efforts along this line. The fact is—and I have heard this confirmed again and again—that the impression which our peace proposal made was that of weakness. That was the main impression, and the other effect which it had—of supporting those in foreign countries who were desirous of peace—was an extraordinarily weak one. This report to which Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer has referred is not in conflict with these facts; for in this report only the effect of the Mülhausen speech in a neutral foreign country was mentioned. It is very natural that there were many people there who had great hopes that a favorable atmosphere would be brought about by the peace proposal. These people were disillusioned when the contents of this speech were made known to them. Attention has already been called to this. But the effect upon foreign countries was altogether that which I have already described, to wit, that the impression gained was that of weakness, and that, in this way, the will to conquer received a very distinct impetus in the enemy countries. These are the results which the many additional endeavors along this line invariably met with.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Touching the last remark, I may venture to state that reports from other neutral States—I have already called attention to this—mention at the outset a very favorable impression caused by the peace proposal. There are a large number of reports to be found in the records which you gentlemen have before you, and in which mention is made of a favorable impression. We have just heard from Mr. v. Romberg that, as the result of his experiences, he entertained a different view.

Concerning the negotiations of which I spoke this morning, the thing to do was to endeavor to win the sympathies of that part of the population which was in favor of peace, by public acknowledgment, particularly bearing upon a statement concerning Belgium. That was what was needed—not matters which were spoken of in private. For this reason, I will not go into the confidential negotiations which you carried on, or take up the subject of the persons with whom you carried on these negotiations, or the statements which you gave on these occasions, or were permitted to give. But there is one thing to which I must refer, Mr. v. Romberg, because you brought it up. And this has reference also to yourself. You will remember that you once informed the Foreign Office, of which Mr. v. Jagow was then at the head, sending the word from Switzerland, that it was desirable that a part of an enemy country should be informed, by means of public announcements, that the annexation or cession of enemy countries was not

our purpose. In response hereto, Mr. v. Jagow telegraphed you the following message:

Give out the information that we have no intention of bringing about very material cessions of territory.

Thereupon, you sent the telegram back again, with the information:

I can not use this; for this will give rise to the feeling that material cessions lie within the scope of our intentions.

I simply bring this up in order to show that, so far as the records inform me, an absolutely clear statement with regard to peace conditions, or with regard to our intentions concerning Belgium, was never made.

Expert v. ROMBERG: I only know of one case in which, certainly, a perfectly clear statement with regard to Belgium was given. That was in the well-known Törring—

DR. SINZHEIMER: 1918! In the spring of 1918.

Expert v. ROMBERG: Yes, 1918! I can simply announce that the opponents of this announcement were guilty of absolute falsification, and that no further notice was taken of the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: At this stage, we can not go into this matter any further.

Expert v. ROMBERG: I simply wanted to state, in reply, that such an announcement had been made. Whether any other announcement of this kind has been made is a matter of which I have no knowledge.

But I would like to say one thing more: That the position of those who favored peace, of whom Dr. Sinzheimer in hostile countries was a very difficult one [*sic*]. We have seen that they were persecuted with fire and sword, particularly in the land that I had the best opportunity to observe: in France. As a matter of fact, in that country, any noticeable results attendant upon an influence brought to bear in this way were not to be expected. I can only repeat that a favorable result never made itself felt, and that a public announcement would have had no other effect than to furnish ammunition for emphasizing the point that it was an indication of Germany's weakness; as very decidedly happened in the case of our peace proposal and where such methods met with great success.

The CHAIRMAN: This ought to close this point. We shall now take up the economic questions. In this connection, documents of a very far-reaching nature have brought to my attention the fact that, in the commencement of the year 1917, that is, during the first days of 1917, a memorial was worked out in the Department of the Interior by one of the higher officials, which is said to have reached the same conclusion as those which were reached by the memorial of the Admiralty Staff. What does your Excellency know about that?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: In the Department of the Interior?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I had matters affecting the U-boat problem, matters of a commercial nature, constantly made the subject of study in the Department of the Interior. I established a system of statistics which was quite far-reaching and which was worked out by Government Counselor Schwartzkopff. The statistics and additional information on the subject were constantly kept abreast of the times. Not a week went by without my talking these matters over with Counselor Schwartzkopff. Special features of work touching this point and that, such as American grain shipments and English statistics, were worked out. But that, in January, 1917, in the Department of the Interior, a memorial was worked out which is supposed to have reached the same conclusions as the memorial of the Admiralty Staff is a matter of which at this time I have no recollection at all. But I can say this, that my own observation of the commercial situation gave me the impression, from the moment when the poor harvest all over the world in the year 1916 was established as a fact—and this was the case with you, too, Mr. Chairman—that the question of providing England with food was made a matter of great difficulty as the result of harvest conditions; that, as the result, England's situation with regard to the U-boat war had been greatly weakened, as compared with the preceding year, when the crops were extraordinarily good; and that, consequently, the prospects of striking England a hard blow economically, and a blow to which the food situation would be peculiarly susceptible were, from the autumn of 1916 on, materially more favorable than they had been six months or a year before. Already at the beginning of October, I had expressed this thought in the conferences with the Reichstag. As far back as the date of the conference at Pless, the protocol of which is in the hands of the committee, I emphatically called attention to this change in the situation. The commercial conditions, to be sure, had undergone a change in favor of the adoption of the unrestricted U-boat war, mainly as the result of the poor harvests all over the world, and particularly as the result of the bad harvests in England and of the ruinously bad harvests in the United States and Canada.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, your Excellency—and this is in accord with the contents of the records—already in the sessions of the 29th of September, 1916, and in the days following thereafter, announced emphatically, as the reports of the budget committee show, that the poor harvests all over the world, and particularly in the United States of America, Canada and England, made the prospects of restricting England's food supply by the unrestricted U-boat war, materially better.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: And in December, if I may be allowed to make the supplemental statement, there came, besides, the news of the poor harvest in Argentina.

The CHAIRMAN: But at that time the crops there were not even ready for cutting.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: But we had the estimates before us.

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly, for the amount of the crops. And I certainly agreed with you—that is absolutely correct—on the basis of the crop estimates, that England's food supply and the food supply of the enemy Powers also would be made difficult thereby. Nevertheless, at that time, your Excellency pointed out—and you did this likewise in the telegram of the 9th of January, 1917, addressed to the Imperial Chancellor—that it was not expedient to announce the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war. You made special reference thereto in your speech of the 29th of September, 1916, saying that when the unrestricted U-boat war was declared, England would bar the importation of provender to Holland and Denmark, and that these countries could then deliver us no more food supplies, and that, if we succeeded in bringing down every other grain ship in the course of the conduct of the unrestricted U-boat war, that would not have been sufficient to constitute a menace to the feeding of the English people.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: If I may be allowed to inject the remark, that referred to 1915 and 1916.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, to 1915 and 1916. But you repeated the same arguments. I believe that my recollection is serving me aright, although I am not certain. But we can read the minutes. It has been two weeks since I have looked them over. But in any event, you always pointed to the fact that, under no circumstances, could we entertain the hope of starving England in the process. At that time you stated: "We have learned by experience what reductions a country can endure, and should beware of underestimating our opponents; England will control its needed food supply and will put the last ship and the last ton into the service of economic supply; and England has control of the neutral Powers, particularly of their merchant fleets." You then proceeded to show that England could only profit by the high freight charges all over the world. You did not believe in the intimidating effect, in the terror which was to be inspired among the neutral Powers, and you said: "If 20 per cent of the ships which run into English ports every month are sunk, who can say to us that England would be bound to starve, with the use of the remaining 80 per cent? For God's sake, do not underestimate British tenacity and the possibilities of food control."

So that, at that time, you unqualifiedly took the stand—and those, as you know, were the last sessions of decisive importance at which the budget committee was heard, and at that time you already were taking the bad harvests all over the world into consideration, even if you were not including the future Argentine harvest in the process—the stand that the sinking of the English tonnage would not be sufficient—and 20 per cent per month

would certainly be a very considerable percentage—sufficient to jeopardize the British food supply. As has already been stated, you even took the same stand on the 9th of January, 1917—if I recollect the contents of the telegram correctly, I haven't it before me at this moment—and you laid special emphasis on the point that it would even be more to our advantage if we should refrain from carrying on the unrestricted U-boat war at that time, because in such case England would receive less in the way of grain imports than if America should participate in the war and should then so control her own food supply as to meet the wants of her allies.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: May I reply to your remarks?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I believe that the Chairman has, after all, in referring to what was said by me at the beginning of October—the date is not specifically put down here in the copy—in referring to what I said—and that was quite a bit; at that time, I believe that I spoke here for more than two hours, the stenographic report is fairly voluminous—I believe that the Chairman, when he read it perhaps overlooked what constituted the precise salient point in regard to crop conditions, or that, perhaps, his recollection of it is no longer exact.

In the first place, I mentioned that our supply was better; our crop was, you will remember, better than in the preceding year, in contrast with England's case, and we no longer had to depend upon the imports from Roumania to the extent that we did in the preceding year. I have pointed out that in the year that was to come, things would be pretty tight for us, as far as could be humanly predicted, but that our situation would be more solid than it had been in the preceding year. I pointed out that we would be less dependent upon the neutral Powers, that, aside from this, and as the result of the pressure that England would exert, we would have to take into account the fact that the imports from neutral neighboring countries would decrease with or without the U-boat war, just as actually turned out to be the case. The movement had already begun. Then I came to the second point, and that was the subject of the world harvest and of England's crops. And then I closed with the following assertions, after I had developed my supporting figures very completely and in great detail:

With regard to this point, that is, the point involving the British crops and the world crops, and the English grain supply, which then, for the first time, fell below the scale of the preceding years, and in regard to the possibilities of the supply from outside—with regard to this point, too, matters have changed, as I shall admit without further argument, and will emphatically assert. This time England will be able to supply its needs from North America either not at all or, at least, under circumstances of the very greatest difficulty. In all probability, she will have to depend to a very great extent upon importing her grain from Australia, Argentina and India. How the

crops will turn out in those regions, is a matter concerning which today it is as yet impossible to form a judgment. For these countries are situated in the other hemisphere. As a rule, the first estimates on which we can depend reach here in December.

It was October then.

If today we were to attempt to estimate the crop of the Argentine Republic, we would be doing what would correspond to attempting to estimate German crops in April. This is a matter in which many chances are involved. There are too many unknown angles in the game. But in any event, one thing is certain, that England, with or without the U-boat war, will have to contend with a notable increase of difficulties in connection with its imports; and today the unrestricted U-boat war—

That is, already at the beginning of October, 1916.

—would have far better prospects of cutting off England from the essential imports of foodstuffs than was the case six months ago.

I made that a matter of emphatic record, even at that time, at the commencement of October.

Now it further appears that all the reports which came in during the course of October, November, and December confirmed my impression. And there is more to be added. At that time, on the occasion of that session—at the commencement of October—I called attention to the fact that, aside from the question of the crop, the matter of the supply of wheat which was already stored up over there in North America was to be taken into consideration, and that this reserve was exceptionally bountiful as the result of the record crop of the preceding year. Now during the months that followed, the fact was established, as the result of my own observation and as the result of the reports which I made efforts to obtain from here and there and everywhere, that a great proportion of the reserves in North America had spoiled. The year before had been, I believe, an unusually wet year. The grain crops had, to a certain extent, been brought in wet, and they had not kept. And, to a great extent, the reserves were of no use other than for fodder purposes. Thereupon, and during the following months, week after week, I had the foreign newspapers examined with particular reference to the reports from America with regard to the apparent grain supply. As a result of this, it turned out that week by week the supplies shrank and that, finally, the point was reached where they were less than the reserves of the preceding year. At this moment I have not the exact amount at hand, but I believe that the fact was that, as early as the beginning of January, the supply was not nearly as great as had been the case in the preceding year and that, in the following months, it diminished to an amount of less than 50 per cent of the supply of the preceding year. The amount of imports from the United States during those months, in

spite of the terrific prices which England paid, was considerably less than of those months of the preceding year. Prices went up by great leaps and bounds; I believe that wheat prices went up to \$2.80 at the beginning of 1917, from less than \$1.00 in peace times. I will not be absolutely certain as to the figures; I am simply mentioning them in order to provide you with the general proportion. All of this showed me that England was making the greatest efforts to import wheatstuffs, but it did not succeed in doing so. The imports remained far behind those of the preceding year. In the telegram that I sent to the Imperial Chancellor on the 9th of January, I gave the figures for the three months of October, November, and December, and at that time the figures, unless my memory fails me, were not quite 1,500,000 tons for the current year, as compared with approximately 2 million tons in the preceding year. Matters became still worse in January—during the first three weeks the figures continued to be published, but not after that—therefore I believe that the grain imports resulting from the new harvest up to the middle of January were only about two thirds as much as had been the case in the corresponding period in the preceding year.

These were all factors which made the economic situation of England appear to me to be far more serious in January, 1917, than it had been in October. With the passing of January, this impression became stronger and stronger, so that, on the 31st day of January, when I spoke of the matter here in the Reichstag, I had a more exact conception of this situation than was possible for me to have on the 9th of January at the time that I telegraphed the Chancellor.

And now may I take up another point? The Chairman called particular attention to the fact that I stressed the following circumstance in my telegram to the Imperial Chancellor, to wit, that, if the United States entered the war against us, then it would become an ally of England's, and then, under given circumstances, it would make sacrifices which it could not make in the capacity of a neutral Power. That was an altogether vague assumption on my part, an assumption that had no ground at first. I believe that it came to be April—for at first the Americans waited to see what we would do, even after they broke off relations with us—before the President had himself vested with the authority to control foodstuffs and, above all else, the importation of foodstuffs. In doing so, he actually held in his hands the situation which I had had in mind on the 9th of January as a vague possibility.

I naturally took very good care not to say anything here about this possibility concerning which no human being could tell me that it would come to pass. That was a matter which was absolutely undisclosed. For although it is true that we handled matters confidentially here—well, you know all the things that leaked out. I would have been the last to have given the Americans the slightest hint in such a matter.

So matters lay thus: It is true that at that time, when I spoke here on the 31st of January, I looked upon the question of food supply as being much more favorable for the launching of the U-boat war than I had ever considered it before, and to a very much greater extent than had been the case in October. I never went to the point of prophesying, which has been so often attributed to me, that, between then and harvest time, America would, under any and all circumstances, collapse. I hoped with my whole heart that this would be the case, and I wished with my whole heart that it would occur. But I never said that it was an absolute certainty. The only thing that I announced was the hope that we might be able to bring England to the point where she would be ready for peace before the United States could come in or had come in with the great weight of all its resources. And even in this connection, I added—I believe it was on the occasion of an interruption of which there is no record in the stenographic reports—that it went without saying that nobody could undertake to guarantee these things; quite consciously in contrast with the guarantees which had, perhaps, been announced by the other side in this connection or that.

At any rate, one thing is certain: I especially considered the situation of the food supply on hand in England and of the supplying of England with food in January as one which was far more favorable in respect to the launching of the U-boat war than had ever been the case at any time during the war. If, in spite of this, I expressed myself as being opposed to the U-boat war on the 1st of February, which was then the subject of discussion, in the telegram which I sent to the Chancellor, I shall have to request that the telegram be read carefully. There is no phrase used in the telegram which can be interpreted as equivalent to the statement that the unrestricted U-boat war could not be launched under any circumstances, or could not be launched during that winter, or until the time of the next harvest. The whole telegram is based on nothing but the oral interview which I had with Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg on the evening of the 28th of January, lasting until directly before his departure—about 11 o'clock at night, I believe—for the General Headquarters in Pless. My view is plainly to be seen, to wit, we must allow the peace matter to so run its course that all the world will see that we are not they who broke matters off, that we were patient up to the very last moment, and that we waited not only until the Entente note reached us but until the Entente note reached Wilson, which was still outstanding on the 9th. It is for this reason that, in two important passages of the telegram, I speak of "a few weeks" during which the reaching of the decision should be postponed. The following is to be found on page 251 of the thick volume.

The considerations brought out in Nos. 1 and 2 show how important it is to the results sought by a U-boat war, to have the neutral Powers held off from participation. Whether this will be possible if ruthless

methods are adopted in the U-boat war, we shall be able to judge better in the course of a few weeks, when the answer of the Entente to Wilson and its results are before us, than we are today.

And on the next page, in the last third:

If, for the reasons above set out, we put off for a few weeks our decision with regard to launching the unrestricted U-boat war, then when our decision is made, the prospect of having the English grain supply decrease to a point materially lower than a 12-week supply will be good. The lower the supply at the commencement of an unrestricted U-boat war, the more certain will our results be and the quicker will they be attained.

So that this whole representation is no brief against the unrestricted U-boat war, but a plea that the decision be postponed until the answer of the Entente to Wilson has been given. During the night of the 8th of January, when this telegram was written, this reply had not yet appeared. But on the 10th of January, it was handed over in Paris, and, late in the afternoon of the 12th, it was made known here. It was with this answer that Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg greeted me on the occasion of our interview on the afternoon of the 12th. So that that event had occurred on which, according to this telegram of mine, the decision was to depend. Certainly my impression at that time—

The CHAIRMAN: We know that. We are now discussing the economic situation. I would simply like to point to the fact that, in this telegram of the 9th, it is stated in so many words:

Paradoxical as it sounds, it is not altogether impossible, therefore, that, compared with the limited U-boat war on commerce, the unrestricted U-boat war would not, in the last analysis, have a harmful effect upon the supplying of England with breadstuffs, but would rather operate in favor of such supply.

And in the next subdivision:

There is no occasion for reaching precipitous decisions since, at the present, time is working for us and not against us in the matter of England's food supply.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That was applicable to the next weeks, and especially to February, for, from March on, the Argentine crop begins to arrive in England. I have laid special emphasis upon the point, Mr. Chairman—if you will read the telegram through—that—

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps it would be as well for us to read it.

(Interruption: It has already been read.)

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I have already laid special stress upon the fact—and in this I will be confirmed by Dr. Sinzheimer, who has an intimate knowledge of the matter—that the months of January and February constitute the lowest ebb of British grain imports. So that it was precisely

during these two months of January and February that time, according to the view which I expressed, was not working against us, but for us. That was what justified me in arguing even against the insistence on the part of the military authorities, that we should be allowed enough time, before reaching our resolve, until the Entente's reply to Wilson was before us. That was the main point, and on this point everything depended.

The CHAIRMAN: Let me put another question to you. In the figures which were given, covering the importation of grainstuffs, etc., a large amount of the imports which came in for the use of the Army and Navy were not included in the amounts on hand, according to English statistics, so far as I know. Is this correct?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That is correct up to July, 1916. After July, 1916, the English statistics were accompanied with a note to the effect that the British imports for the purposes of the government were included. I believe, from July on. I will not state under oath that this is a fact. But I believe that, from July, 1916, on—and it may have been somewhat earlier—they were included. Of course, whether everything was included is a question.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I believe that we can drop this phase of the subject. The statement of Excellency Helfferich in this regard is sufficient for my purpose.

Delegate DR. COHN: When Minister Dr. Helfferich made his earlier statements in the budget committee, and also in the course of the statement made by him today, he has always mentioned wheatstuffs only as the basic element of England's food supply. But so far as I recollect, Dr. Helfferich has made no reference in the past, or today, to rice in its connection with supplying England with food. According to information which I have received, the fact is that during the war the rice imports into England amounted to double, I believe, what they had been in peace times. Was the importation of rice and the storage of enormous quantities of rice in England a matter which was taken into consideration in estimating the economic results which were to follow?

The CHAIRMAN: It was my purpose, too, not only to put the question concerning rice, but to inquire in respect to other foodstuffs which, after all, play an important part, particularly the importation of cold storage meats, canned meats, etc. In the course of these proceedings, we simply spoke of grainstuffs and not of these other foodstuffs. And it is surprizing that, as a matter of fact, England came through without having been subjected to any notable restriction in the matters of the necessities of life. In this connection, we would also have to go into the question of lards and fats, etc. Does your Excellency know anything about supplying England with these foodstuffs, whether at an earlier or a later period?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I will answer the Chairman's question. (Laughter.)

Delegate DR. COHN: I wish to be heard on the order of business.

The CHAIRMAN: I urgently request that no indications of any kind, of merriment or of approval, be manifested by anyone present. Otherwise I shall be left with no other resource than to order the hall vacated. I have already announced this fact recently. Dr. Cohn on the order of business.

Delegate DR. COHN: I appeal to the committee, and ask it to take knowledge of the remark just made by Dr. Helfferich. I put a question, the materiality and propriety of which was at once recognized by the Chairman, in that he stated that he, too, had intended to put the question, and he then repeated my question. Thereupon, the witness announced that he would answer the Chairman's question. The result of this is, I believe, to confront the committee, to confront us all, with the question as to whether Minister Dr. Helfferich is to be permitted to make such an announcement to the Chairman or to the committee, the effect of which is to consciously ignore a question put by a member of the committee and to give the impression by inference that he refuses to answer such question. This should call for action by the committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already and recently announced the fact that, in accordance with the order of business and with the provisions of the constitution and with the regulations of law governing the investigating committee, every member of this committee has the right to put questions, and that it is the duty of every witness who, upon entering into participation in these proceedings, has taken the oath to tell the pure truth, hiding nothing and adding nothing, although aware of the membership of the committee, to answer literally every question.

(Witness DR. HELFFERICH: May I be allowed to speak?)

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: My oath is to the effect that I am to tell the pure truth and the whole truth. I will state the pure truth with regard to the importation of rice and of canned meats, to the extent that I am informed in this regard, and with regard to everything which, as a matter of fact, is made the subject of inquiry. It follows that in no way is the assumption justified of a refusal to testify on my part, or of actions in conflict with my oath.

For the rest, this morning I made an announcement which is well known to the Chairman, in which I pointed out a method for continuing these proceedings without involving ourselves in the question which, it seems to me, must be apparent to everybody to be bound to lead to a difference. I did not touch upon that question. I again announce that I am ready to answer the question concerning the importation of rice to England, concerning the importation of canned meats, etc., as it has been put by the Chairman.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, now I am going to make use of the term which you have used: Let us, pray, not involve ourselves in

misconceptions. In the inflection that you gave the phrase "I will answer the *Chairman*," you gave us to understand that you would not answer a certain member of the committee. If we failed to perceive that, we should have been deaf. That is what you said, and I infer, from what you have said, that your statement is really this: "I will answer the Chairman, but I will not answer if a certain member asks me a question." That is the principal question, so far as we are concerned, and it is the constitution which will be conclusive with respect to ourselves, and not the interpretation of the witness.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: In my announcement of this morning—I am sorry now that I did not insist upon reading it—I gave you my idea of the law, and I pointed out a method to you, by means of which the proceedings could continue without passing in advance upon my conception of the law, and without having the committee become involved in a new situation which might render the continuation of the proceedings impossible. Day before yesterday—but I would prefer not to refer to these matters, in order to do nothing on my part which could make the situation still more difficult. I can only repeat that I am ready to give testimony to the best of my ability, based on facts and data known to me, and which have a bearing upon the matters concerning which inquiries are addressed to me.

The Chairman: I told your Excellency today that the committee will act upon this petition. You are aware that, as a matter of fact, we have not as yet had an opportunity of doing so, if we desire to terminate the hearings. I can not allow you to devise a method as to how the committee is to conduct its proceedings. We are to be guided exclusively and only by the methods prescribed by the constitution and the order of business of the committee, and in accordance therewith answers must be given to every single question which is put by any single member of the committee.

Delegate WARMUTH (on the order of business): I certainly consider it essential at the present stage of the proceedings, to have the announcement read which was handed in early this morning by his Excellency Dr. Helfferich, so that we may be enabled to consider the contents thereof, and to render a judgment applicable to the present situation.

The CHAIRMAN: In such case, I suggest that the committee withdraw into conference. Ladies and gentlemen will agree to this. (Agreement.)
(The committee withdraws into conference at 5:18 o'clock.)

The session is reopened at 6:20 o'clock.

The CHAIRMAN: The session is reopened. The committee has rejected the motion of Delegate Warmuth to read the objections interposed by his Excellency Helfferich against the last penalty of 300 marks imposed, by a vote of 4 to 2, Delegate Dr. Cohn not voting.

I will now ask your Excellency Helfferich whether you have other reasons for your refusal to testify in answer to the questions of Delegate Dr. Cohn, reasons other than those which are included in your petition, which, as it happens, has already been published in the press.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I know of no refusal to testify with regard to Dr. Cohn. I have already stated that I am ready to testify to any given question which is put to me. So that we are not confronted with any refusal to testify. Day before yesterday, I refused to participate in any questions or answers in connection with Delegate Dr. Cohn, and I did so with a clear explanation of my grounds, which was bound to make it plain to everybody that, so far as I am concerned, the position that I take is fundamental and final. My reasons for so doing, I have recently communicated to this committee. I repeated these reasons in my objection of this morning, and emphasized them, I believe, still further in response to the remarks of Delegate Dr. Cohn.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee is of the opinion that no grounds whatsoever exist, sufficient to justify a refusal of the witness to answer a question of a member of the committee, and that, therefore, the refusal to answer a question put by a member of the committee constitutes a refusal to testify. For this reason, the committee has voted to again impose upon Secretary of State (retired) Dr. Helfferich the extreme penalty possible, of 300 marks. The votes on this resolution were, as was the case with the former resolution, in the proportion of 4 to 2, Delegate Dr. Cohn not voting. There will be no further discussion on the point. You are entitled to repeat your objections in the same form that you have already adopted. There will be no discussion concerning this resolution.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: In my opinion, the imposition of a double penalty in the way of a money penalty, based upon a refusal to testify, is in absolute violation of the laws of criminal procedure.

The CHAIRMAN: We can not go into this question. That is a matter for the committee to decide, and your remedy consists in filing your exceptions. There will be no discussion on this point at this time.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Very well, I voice my exception.

The CHAIRMAN: Very well. Exception has been taken. We shall continue. Dr. Sinzheimer—

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Does the Chairman see fit to have me answer his question, the material question which has already been put?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, I see fit to have information given on this point.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Then I will state that I—I can not state exactly the month; it may have been March or April—submitted figures to the budget committee, of which I have here a multigraph extract, on page 6 whereof there is a *résumé* of the progress of importations of foodstuffs to Great Britain. First of all comes wheat. The figures relate to 1913 and

to 1916. 106 million of wheat in 1913—that means hundredweights—against 100 million in the year 1916; corn 42.2 million in 1913, against 34.2 million in the year 1916; about 18 million of oats in the year 1913, against about 12 million in the year 1916.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, but in this connection I have to continue to point out that, up to July at least, the fact is that imports on ships which were chartered for military purposes are included.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That is right, that is what I have already brought out myself: 22.4 million of barley in 1913, as against 15.8 million in 1916; 4.4 million of rice in 1913, as against 8.7 million in 1916. In the case of rice, therefore, a notable increase, but, you see, an increase of only 4.3 million hundredweights, against the wheat imports of 106 million hundredweights in the year 1913, and 100 million hundredweights in the year 1916, so that in the year 1916 the whole rice imports only amounted to 8.7 per cent of the grain imports, and the increase amounted to only 4.3 per cent. So that there was an increase in the case of rice. But in the matter of quantity, it is of no especial importance as compared with the imports of wheat and corn and the imports of barley. Lard remained about the same, a change from 2 million to 1.9 million. Eggs went back from 21.6 to 6.6, and butter from 4.1 to 2.2; in margarines there was an increase—it is well known that the Dutch butter-fat establishments were submitted to pressure and that the raw materials for manufacture were only delivered upon receipt of large deliveries to England—in margarines there was an increase of from 1.5 to 2.7, in cheeses from 2.3 to 2.6. Meat remained the same: 23.3 as against 23.3. So that at that time, I submitted a *résumé* which did not only include grain imports, but the imports of all other important foodstuffs.

The CHAIRMAN: Dr. Sinzheimer, if you please.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, I may now be permitted to take up another matter. This concerns the bases of the memorial of the 22d of December, 1916, which is known to you. You know its contents. You know that in this memorial the stand was taken that the results which would come from the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war would consist in forcing England to come to the point of peace within five months. And now under VI of the accompanying memorial, the dangers are considered which such unrestricted U-boat war would bring in its train, so far as our relations with the United States are concerned, and it is there stated: That the break with the United States would have to be taken into consideration, but that it was really not worth considering, since by the 1st of August, at the very latest, England would be forced to come to the point of peace, so that there was no necessity to consider what effect a break with the United States would have. I will call your attention to the final paragraph:

I therefore reach the conclusion that an unrestricted U-boat war so correctly timed as to bring about peace before the gathering of the harvest of the summer of 1917, that is to say, before August 1, will have to be at the cost of a break with the United States, for the reason that we are left absolutely no other choice. It follows that, in spite of the danger of a break with America, an unrestricted U-boat war, promptly launched, is the proper means of winning the war. Moreover, it is the only means to this end.

So that the fixing of the point of time, and asserting that, by August 1st at the latest, this result of ending the war would be attained, meant that, on account of this fixing of a time limit, the break with the United States could be of no particular significance. Now I want to ask you whether it was your opinion also, or rather—I may venture to assume that it was not your opinion, in view of what you have just said, your Excellency, that the fixing of a time limit in this case was really possible at all—did I understand you correctly? I believe that I have a right to understand you as so saying.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I do not know, Dr. Sinzheimer, whither your question is tending. Perhaps you will be good enough to complete it.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Then I will go into detail. I mean that, if the termination of the war on August 1st at the latest was the condition precedent to a successful termination of the U-boat war, then the break with the United States could not be of any particular significance. Now the question is this: Looking at the matter from your standpoint, to wit, that the fixing of a time limit was not a matter of practical consideration, were you not bound to look upon the break with the United States as a matter of quite a different significance in contradistinction to those who looked upon the break with the United States from the standpoint of the writer of the memorial? You will undoubtedly admit, your Excellency, that, by the 1st of July and by the 1st of August—and this is primarily the real question—those results which had been prophesied in the memorial had not come about, namely, that England would by that time have been forced to take up the question of peace.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The memorial is a memorial coming from the Admiralty Staff. I assume absolutely no responsibility for the memorial. I am in no way to be identified with this memorial. I opposed this memorial in my telegram of the 9th of January. I have repeatedly pointed out here, and have publicly declared in the Reichstag, that guarantees concerning a time limit within which the U-boat war would be terminated could not be given. If Almighty God had guaranteed the fact to me that England would be conquered by the 1st of August, then I would certainly—excuse the term—have been an idiot if I had not worked in favor of the U-boat war with all the resources at my command. I entertained the hope that it might, perhaps, succeed. I believed that every possible thing must be done in order to attain this end. But I stated in so many words that no

guarantee could be given to this effect. It was for this reason that the break with the United States weighed so heavily upon me, as was the case during the entire period, and, as a matter of fact, before the announcement of the U-boat war as well as thereafter.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Now you said this morning that the general attitude was to accept the break with the United States as a part of the bargain. Do you not believe that it was this precise official memorial of the Admiralty Staff, which was in the hands of the members of the main committee of the Reichstag, which was a decisive factor in creating this feeling that the break with the United States really did not need to be taken into consideration?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: This argument was of no decisive weight so far as I was concerned. Whether it had this effect on others, is a matter of which I can not judge.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: So that you attributed no decisive weight to this representation in the memorial?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I certainly did not consider this representation of the memorial that, under any and all circumstances, the U-boat war would come to an end by the 1st of August, to be of conclusive weight, because I said to myself that we would have to reckon with the possibility of England being able to resist us for a longer period of time.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Very well. I shall now take up the fundamental principles of the memorial, and will appeal to you more in the character of an expert than in that of a witness. I will now question you in your capacity as an expert and authority. Your Excellency, you are acquainted with the grounds of this memorial which has played a very important part. You know that, with the exception of Professor Levy, no scientific authority—and I do not mean to say that Professor Levy is a scientific authority—took part in drawing it up, and that, generally speaking, the men who cooperated in its construction were people engaged in private commercial life and were not outstanding authorities. Do you believe that the use of such methods for drawing up a memorial of such extreme importance was sufficient, or insufficient?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I would request that I be excused from testifying concerning this point. In the course of carrying out my duties as an official, I had occasion to express my views against the memorials of the Admiralty Staff, but I can see no occasion for discussing here the manner and form in which I performed my duty in this respect.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Then let me establish one fact from the record, and you will be good enough to correct me if my assertions are incorrect. At the moment I have not the particular records before me, otherwise I would read them to you. You declared yourself as being against the memorial, and made very definite statements with regard

to individual views of the various experts. This statement is probably correct.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That was, I think, almost a year before.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: It occurred at a later date also.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: My telegram of the 9th of January is the only document of record opposed to this memorial.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Correct; it was the year before, on the occasion of the first memorial. But the first memorial contained this prophesy in the main: that England would be overcome in four or five months.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: In the meantime, the situation had undergone a radical change, as I have already stated.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Then I will ask you today what you think of this method of constructing this memorial; what is your view on the point?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: At that time I expressed my opinion against the Admiralty Staff, concerning the memorial, in a detailed opinion directed to the Imperial Chancellor, which can, in all probability, be found in the records. I would not see my way clear to give a scientific criticism of the memorial of the Admiralty Staff before this tribunal, before which, in my opinion, this question is not properly brought.

The CHAIRMAN: Here is a question—it is connected with this matter—which I desire to put to you. Were those gentlemen who were selected as experts by the Admiralty Staff and whose names were recently communicated to us known to your Excellency? It is strange to note that, among all these experts, there is not a single representative of German ocean commerce. Did you, by any chance, call attention to the fact that the experts who were best qualified to give an opinion with regard to the effect of the sinkings upon the world's tonnage and upon the British tonnage were, as a matter of fact, never heard at all?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: It is true that these things were made a matter of oral comment. Whether they were made the subject of written comment, I do not know. I myself was in touch with experts belonging to shipping circles, and I am bound to say that their judgment with regard to the questions arising in connection with the U-boat war was not very definite, but, on the contrary, was uncertain. This was particularly true in the case of the director of the Hamburg-American Line, Mr. Ballin, who is now dead.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Now to take up a question of fact, your Excellency: I believe that I read in your book—but I may be mistaken—that this important memorial, this memorial of the 22d of December, was first brought to your attention on the 6th of January—to your attention, I say—you, who after all were the expert for the Foreign Office in this matter, and perhaps one of the first experts to be considered in such a matter, so that you, as you have described the circumstances, were obliged to sit down

on the night of the 8th, to make a quick study of everything and then give your opinion on the case to the Imperial Chancellor in the form of a telegram. Is that correct, or am I mistaken?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: As a matter of fact, the memorial was not sent to me by the Admiralty Staff until the 6th day of January. That is true.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Now one question more, your Excellency. We can, of course, safely assume—as I say, you will correct me if I make a misstatement—that the result prophesied by this memorial, and which was to consist in forcing England to accept peace on the 1st of August, did not come true, and that the further statement which at that time was announced in naval circles and which Mr. v. Capelle has confirmed as such in the course of his remarks here, to wit, that no troop transports would come over here, etc.—that this result which was accepted as being sure to come about did not come about, so that the whole weight of America's assistance, consisting of the many hundreds of thousands of troops on the west front, was in truth and reality brought to bear—a result which was not considered as a possibility if the war was to end on August 1. For that appears to me to be the crucial point, to wit, that since the war had not come to an end on the first of August, America's inexhaustible resources could from that time on make themselves felt, particularly in the matter of man-power. That is, after all, the crucial point.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Dr. Sinzheimer, in putting this question, you are forcing me to revert to the circumstance which the committee desires to eliminate from consideration. In my opinion, the submarine war would have succeeded if its effect had not been paralyzed by influences working from within.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Then let me say one thing. The memorial contains the prophesy that England was to be overcome by the first of July. The Reichstag resolution, which you have just mentioned, was dated July 19, your Excellency, so that I do not need to go into this vexed political question.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: We will have no quarrel about the day and the dates. The only thing that I can assert as a fact—and I have already done so recently—is that the operation of the U-boat war was so effective that single, clearly-defined symptoms of an inclination toward peace on the part of our enemies were manifested for the first time in the course of this war, and the ripening of this possibility of peace toward maturity was destroyed by things concerning which I am forbidden to speak here and, consequently, I shall ask to be excused from testifying with respect to matters which, under these conditions, would appear to be capable only of a quite one-sided representation.

The CHAIRMAN: I merely request you to answer this question: How do

you explain the fact that, in spite of the material shrinking in the matter of the importation of foodstuffs, the fact is that, after all, England held out far beyond the first of July and continued to do so, and that her food supply was materially better than the food supply of the German people at the same time? We simply can not get over the fact that, in spite of the circumstance that in July, August, September, and October, more tonnage was sunk than was assumed would be sunk in the memorial of the Admiralty Staff, the truth is that British food supply was dealt no severe blow, at least not a blow severe enough to bring about the shortage of foodstuffs in England, let alone to bring England to the point of refusing to continue with the conduct of the war.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I have given you all the material which was available to me in respect to the importation of foodstuffs. This material shows that, as a matter of fact, the food supply of England underwent a very considerable diminution. Moreover, the question of what was imported for governmental purposes—in a veiled way—loses force when confronted with the statistics of the American Government concerning their wheat shipments to England, which did not amount to much more than 50 per cent of the shipments of earlier years. In my opinion, it is a false assumption to contend that England did not suffer materially by virtue of the U-boat war. I must repeat that the political effect which, in my opinion, it was possible to bring about was ripening to maturity when this effect was destroyed by counter-effects emanating from Germany.

The CHAIRMAN: Your last remark has absolutely nothing to do with answering the question which I put. We shall postpone this inquiry until we have sufficient material before us. Therefore I ask that you will not revert to it. The fact is, after all, that no such hunger situation as existed in Germany came to pass in England, even though it is beyond doubt that the food supply was diminished. What happened was precisely that which you most correctly prophesied in your speech of the 29th of September, 1916:

For God's sake, do not underestimate British tenacity and the possibilities of food control.

So that, as a matter of fact, that which you held out as a prospect at that time, actually occurred.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The truth is that England did everything that she could in order to free herself from the iron grip of the U-boat war. But I repeat that this effect can not be competently presented from the one side only, and I believe that there is no purpose in going any further into this matter before we are in a position to establish the political results of this pressure.

The CHAIRMAN: You recently said, your Excellency, that during the year

1916 there was a monthly increase of ten submarines. That was probably a small error, because Admiral v. Capelle gave the number as eight.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I said that this was so, as well as I could give the figures from memory.

The CHAIRMAN: Now I should like to ask whether you included in your calculations the sinkings of from two to three boats? You know that in the month of May we had a figure of boats sunk amounting to no less than seven.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: It was impossible for me to burden my mind with these technical details of the conduct of the U-boat war. I was to such an extent taken up with other matters which had to do with my own field of effort, as the Chairman certainly knows, that it was impossible for me to burden myself further with the working out of the technical details which it was the business of the Admiralty Staff and the Navy to work out. In view of everything which came to me from the Navy, I entertained the hope that even if the increased efficiency of counter-measures would result in increased sinkings, we would be able to depend with certainty not upon a diminution of our U-boat fleet, but upon its increase during the conduct of the unrestricted U-boat war. Speaking generally, I believe that that is what occurred, although not quite to the extent which had been anticipated.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to announce the fact, in this connection, that the comparison of the figures which I recently called for, of the actual increase in U-boats after the announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war, with the figures which had been promised, has not yet been given. As a matter of fact, the number of U-boats was materially reduced, not only by the circumstance that the numbers which it was expected would be constructed were not reached by far, but also by the circumstance of the increased sinkings. Did you know of this?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: These are matters of which I have no very distinct recollection. That is surely a question which appertains more to the Admiralty and the Navy Department than to my field of action.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I believe that, at this stage of the discussion, we owe it to Dr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg to read a passage from his letter of the 25th of June, 1917, in the course of which he attempts to draw political conclusions from the fact that, on the 1st of July, the disillusionment was complete that the results which had been prophesied were not brought about. I shall venture to read these passages, so that no misleading idea of the situation may result, to the effect that the then political branch was working in cooperation with the views of the Admiralty Staff. The material passage of the letter reads as follows:

In describing the results which are to be expected by the further conduct of the submarine war, it seems to me that, with all our assurance we should be cautious. The prophesies which have been based upon

statistics and calculations have shown themselves to be altogether too unreliable to permit of their repetition with any hope of carrying conviction. On the other hand, we must leave no stone unturned to keep domestic differences within bounds. The question of war aims should be allowed to rest absolutely, and should by no means be allowed to take such form as to permit various classes of the population to be played against each other according to their political affiliations, and by an appeal to the military and political authorities. The prospects of a peace to be dictated by us have been relegated to so indistinct, and, in any case, to so remote a future, that the holding out of the promise of a comfortable peace, in view of the long and tedious road which we have still to travel, would be bound to lead to new and disastrous disillusionments.

And then in another part of the same letter, he says:

It is very questionable whether Austria-Hungary will allow herself to be held up to the mark beyond autumn. That England will by that time have been forced to the point of capitulation, appears to be out of the question. Even if we were to be in the position of doing no more than carrying on the war over next winter, we could not count upon thoroughly mastering our enemies by means of the U-boat war next spring or, as a matter of fact, by any point of time which can be announced in advance.

That was the political view-point of the Chancellor at that time, which certainly is in accord with the political conclusions which were bound to be drawn as the result of the failure of the prophecy of the Admiralty Staff, which undoubtedly had awakened the greatest expectations on the part of the people and was naturally followed by the greatest kind of disillusionment. That is, of course, beyond all question. But I should like to ask you—I am not going into the matter of the inclination to accept peace, and particularly am I not going into the question, your Excellency, of whether, if there was any inclination on England's part to take up the question of peace, this inclination was due to the unrestricted U-boat war or to the Russian revolution which at that time gave rise to the greatest anxiety in England and was bound to give rise to it—I simply ask you whether you know that the military weapon of the unrestricted U-boat war actually operated to force the conclusion of a peace, or whether the truth of the matter is not simply this, that what we wanted to do, namely, to force England to seek peace along with us, did not come about. It certainly would have had to manifest itself in the form of compulsion, even if certain diverging tendencies, as you assume them to be, had set in; for compulsion either exists or does not exist, and can, therefore, not be removed if it actually exists as a compulsion, and the purpose of the unrestricted U-boat war was simply and solely to compel England to come to the point of peace through the exertion of military pressure.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The conflict which we had to fight out to the

end with England was not a legal battle, but a war which had to be fought to a finish, and, to this end, what was needed was not words, but acts. So I beg that you will not lay emphasis upon legal conceptions, but upon political and military results. How matters stood with the U-boat war was a question into which I went with very considerable emphasis, here in this hall on the 30th of April. At that time, I laid stress on everything which justified us in our hopes. It was at the close of a month in which our highest sinking point was reached. But at that time, after I had drawn a picture which was not only for German eyes to see, but which was particularly constructed for the benefit of Count Czernin, whose memorial lay at that time before us, I stated here at a confidential session of the committee: "If, as the result of anything I have said to you, the conclusion is drawn that we will finish England, at the same time, we must, after all, be ready to prepare our minds for a recognition of the fact that perhaps everything will not come about as rapidly as we hoped." And I added: "These are matters which we are handling amongst ourselves, and there is no necessity of mentioning them outside." And since in this situation it seemed to me necessary above all else for us to have backbone, I said: "I will take part in no spirit of depression; we can have no use for that"; and I submitted a statement of the peace conditions which would be offered us if, at this time, we were to give any indication of weakness so far as our enemies were concerned, and the pity of it is that this picture came true.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, let me remind you of another speech which frankly announced the boldest expectations which had been voiced in the memorial of the Admiralty Staff. At that time, you made an important speech in which you spoke of the upset world which would be the result of the U-boat war. I never forgot that speech. Only he could expect an upset world as the result of the U-boat war who was not willing to close a peace of understanding with England but who was expecting a complete overthrow of the relations of the Powers.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: If we had won the war against this coalition, it would have been an epoch-making event. If England had come to the point of meeting us and of taking its seat with us at the conference table and negotiating with us concerning the peace of understanding, then it would have been an epoch-making event; for in that case we would have proved that we could have stood out against even so powerful a coalition as that.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The question is whether we could have come to that point with or without the U-boat war.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That is a question which no one can answer.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The recorder has appended his questions to the sentence: "We desired to force England to accept peace by means of the U-boat war." I venture to ask who is meant by the term

"we." The Admiralty Staff, in the course of its calculations, never spoke of forcing England to her knees, but announced its absolute assurance, in its memorial of the 22d of December—yes, even undertook to guarantee that England would be brought to the point of being ready for peace; and if the words are used here that "we" desired to force England to the point of peace, I believe that, by the use of these words, a wrong conception would be created with regard to the object which the responsible parties strove to attain. So far as I personally am concerned—and I may perhaps mention this here in connection with a letter which I wrote to Field Marshal v. Hindenburg on the 25th of June—I was neither on the 9th of January, nor at any other time, able to absolutely assure myself that we would be able to force England to the point of peace by means of the U-boat war. I did not assume that to be the case. So far as I was concerned, I was not surprised by the fact that this result was not accomplished. I took the stand, for my part, which I have already explained here, that the best thing which the U-boat war could bring about for us consisted in bringing England to the point of seriously considering whether or not a continued loss of tonnage was not a matter less to be desired than a peace of understanding in which it was still possible for England and her allies to participate. I never believed that this peace of understanding would be a peace based on victory, a peace which we could dictate. On the contrary, I was of the opinion that we would be obliged, for the purposes of this peace, to make our conditions very modest. But on the 9th of January, I was, to be sure, of the opinion that success in bringing about a peace on such modest terms through the launching of the U-boat war was at all events preferable to the outlook which the Supreme High Command of the Army held up to me, namely, that, without the unrestricted U-boat war, we would in no event be able to bring the war to a termination which would be acceptable. If, then, we are to discuss here, or if it is to be established here, that England, as a matter of fact, was not overcome, and why it was that she was not overcome by July 1 or August 1—I do not know exactly which date in question is the right one—to the extent of being forced to make peace, it seems to me that this is really a conclusion which is outstripped by the facts. That England was not forced to make peace, is a fact which, of course, all the world has known since that time. What I mean to say is that, so far as the great question which we are to solve is concerned, we shall go no further if we stop at this point. We can only get ahead if we attempt primarily—today we can not discuss these things—to find out whether the result was reached by the U-boat war which seemed possible to me, too; that is, whether England was ever brought to the point where she was willing to negotiate. For, in my opinion, no purpose is served in proving that the calculations of the Admiralty Staff were unsound. Why, we know all that. The only question we have to solve is whether the method of the U-boat war was

such as, after all, could have made it possible for us to have terminated the war in such a way as to be acceptable to us, even in face of the danger of the entry of the United States into the war. That, after all, seems to me to be the crux of the question.

(Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Certainly.)

The crux does not consist in the circumstance that the U-boat war failed to come up to the hopes of the Admiralty Staff; nor does it consist in establishing why it was that this result was not attained; nor in establishing to what extent it was possible for England to increase her own production or to limit her own consumption, for, so far as we are concerned, the real issue can be nothing but this: Was this resolve to carry on the U-boat war so senseless a step that, under no conditions, could it have carried with it the possibility of success? Would it not have been possible to have so managed that, from the results of the U-boat war, still further political advantages would have followed? My opinion is that it is only when we consider this question that we can reach a correct judgment concerning the question of the U-boat war. This is my personal opinion, but I have thought it proper to state it once more in connection with those passages from my letters which have been read here.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, I absolutely agree with you; but it is impossible for us to take up these questions today, as this will be done in a special proceeding which will not come up until later.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I consider his Excellency Bethmann's amendment to the words I used, justified. I said "we." I will admit that this does not and can not apply to the political branch. I will be glad to express this, so far as I am concerned, if it is thought material. But I should like to emphasize one thing: If I used the word "we," I had in mind the standpoint of the Admiralty, and the attitude of the press to the extent that it publicly supported the stand taken by the Admiralty. There were great portions of the press which openly supported those great expectations, the prospect of which were held out in the memorial of the Admiralty Staff, and, in so doing, perhaps plunged and guided the people into the realm of false hopes.

But there is one matter which, above all else calls for our attention. In the memoirs of Czernin, with which we are familiar, Czernin tells us in detail that at that time, when Austria at first did not desire to take part in the unrestricted U-boat war, it had been brought to the point of agreeing to do so on the strength of the definite assertion made by Admiral Holtzendorff and members of his staff, that "we, the Admiralty Staff, undertake to guarantee success in the briefest possible time, this to consist in forcing England to her knees." This is stated, word for word, in the memoirs of Czernin. Of course, I do not mean to state that this is necessarily the actual fact; but it is in this way that it is stated in Czernin's memoirs. So

that if I said that "we" had taken that stand, I must limit the application of the remark to the Admiralty and to the press, to the extent that the latter supported the expectations held out by the Admiralty Staff and lulled the German people into the false belief that, as a matter of fact, England, as the term was used in the press, "could be forced to her knees." I believe that I heard it stated today that the political branch had no such thought.

The CHAIRMAN: That has been established by the statements of his Excellency Helfferich, as well as by those of his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg.

Delegate DR. COHN: If I may be allowed to put a question in connection with the last statements made by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, it is the following: If I speak absolutely from the standpoint which Mr. v. Bethmann has just taken, I, too, will have to admit that the political branch is not to be understood as included in the term "we" which has just been discussed. But the question to be decided here is this: What counter-measures against the unquestionably opposed policy of the Admiralty Staff—I will not say the Admiralty Staff, but the naval authorities—what counter-measures against this policy which revealed itself in the columns of far-reaching newspaper reports—what counter-measures, I say, were taken by the political department? For the fact really was, your Excellency, if my recollection is correct, that not only the standpoint which Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg has just announced to us here, failed to find expression in the press, but those people who expressed their doubts in the press, and those whose statements in the press which differed from their policy, were suppressed; editors were lectured by the censorship authorities, were forbidden to publish such articles as might be opposed to the policy of the naval authorities.

The CHAIRMAN: In the papers which are before us, there exist, as a matter of fact, evidences of influences of this kind. On this point there is a letter of his Excellency v. Bethmann—I do not know whether it is a letter, or a telegram, or some kind of a memorandum—to the effect that the censorship of the press has been taken from the office of the Secretary of the Navy Department and turned over to the Admiralty Staff. There are numerous communications on the subject in the material which lies before us, which were drawn up by the Imperial Chancellor for the purpose of having the press instructed not to place difficulties in the path of the course of action taken by the Imperial Chancellor, that is, in connection with publications by the political department, and not to thwart the same. Of course, this only goes back to a certain point of time. I should just like to ask whether attempts of this kind were made later, during the later period after the censorship of the press had been taken over from the Secretary of the Navy Department to the Admiralty Staff.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I repeatedly called to the attention

of Admiral Holtzendorff, in the course of oral conversations, the great dangers which might result from articles of an extravagant nature, and I repeatedly requested him to see to it that such extravagant statements were not made public. Admiral Holtzendorff constantly promised me that he would do his utmost in this connection. The results did not reach the point which I had hoped that they might. In what manner influence was brought to bear upon the press in individual cases, it is impossible for me personally to state. In this connection, certain officials in the Foreign Office and in the Imperial Chancery were called upon, whose duty it was to carry out my directions.

The CHAIRMAN: I should prefer that this question—the whole question of the bringing of influence to bear upon the press will be handled in special proceedings—be not further gone into today. We will take it up in another connection.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I should like now, once and for all, and taking the records as a basis, to settle the great debated question as to the source of the term “bring England to her knees.” I will ask you to consider the memorial of Minister v. Treutler of March 3, 1916. It is therein stated:

The competent representatives of the Navy state that they could so reduce the shipping space which was available for providing the insular territory of Great Britain with foodstuffs and raw material within a definite period, which is considered by the military authorities as sufficient, that England will be brought to her knees.

So it is stated in the memorial of Minister v. Treutler, who says that the competent representatives of the Navy made this assertion.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: In what memorial is that, Dr. Sinzheimer?

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In the memorial of Minister v. Treutler, who is attacking the launching of the U-boat war. He states that the competent representatives of the Navy took the stand that England could be forced to her knees. Hence the competent representatives of the Navy openly took this stand.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: But my impression is that this expression of bringing her to her knees would have to be found in the memorials of the Admiralty Staff, and so far as I know, this expression is not contained therein.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Not in the memorials!

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe that the expression used by Minister v. Treutler, the representative of the Foreign Office at the General Headquarters, is not conclusive or of any force as evidence. If, on his part, he interpreted the views of the Navy as meaning that England was to be forced to her knees, that may have been an error. In any event, the expression, so far as I know, was not used by the Navy. But it seems

to me that, since his Excellency v. Koch is here, the easiest way would perhaps be to have him answer this question.

The CHAIRMAN: Excellency v. Koch, will you be good enough to address us on this point?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I already stated the last time I testified, that this expression was never used by the Navy.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Never?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No—to bring to her knees—by the Navy, never.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But, Mr. v. Treutler. (Commotion.)

The CHAIRMAN: That is not conclusive. That was a catch phrase, which at that time had already been used by the press, and when he says this in his letter—

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Why, the well-known Society for the Prompt Overthrow of England was established at that time.

REAR ADMIRAL v. BÜLOW: I might, perhaps, be able to help in clearing this matter up.

The CHAIRMAN: But he says it with regard to the competent authorities and, to a certain extent, for purposes of brevity.

If you please, Rear Admiral v. Bülow!

REAR ADMIRAL v. BÜLOW: I can testify that I know that Admiral v. Holtzendorff always took steps against the use of this phrase, and expressed his vexation concerning it.

(Witness DR. ZIMMERMANN: I can testify to that, too.)

That happened very often; I often experienced it.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: May I put the following question to the Imperial Chancellor? An individual who was in the particular confidence of Mr. v. Hertling informed me that when the unrestricted U-boat war was resolved upon, Mr. v. Hertling, who had very little faith in this measure, sent him to Vienna to Count Czernin, in order to persuade Count Czernin to persuade the Berlin authorities with whom the decision lay to give up this measure, and that, thereupon, Count Czernin had said to him: "I regret to state that I can do nothing in this matter. A few days ago, Admiral v. Holtzendorff occupied the same chair in which you are sitting now, and Admiral v. Holtzendorff declared to me that in five months it was absolutely certain that England would be forced to make peace. I understand nothing of these technical matters. Since these statements have been made, I am now no longer in a position to intermeddle in the matter." Does the Imperial Chancellor know anything of this mission, which at that time Mr. v. Hertling sent to Vienna?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: No, at the present I have no recollection of it.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: It is stated that his Excellency Zimmermann was there at the time.

The CHAIRMAN: His Excellency Zimmermann can, perhaps, inform us.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: At that time, I went to Vienna together with Admiral v. Holtzendorff. But I know nothing of a mission of Hertling.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: It was at a session of the Crown Council at Vienna, at which the Emperor Karl presided. At this session of the Crown Council, we were represented by Admiral v. Holtzendorff and Secretary of State Zimmermann—

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Yes, that was the case.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER:—and on the other side was Admiral Haus, among others. Czernin says that the authorities of the political department were, primarily, against the U-boat war, but that Admiral Holtzendorff had undertaken to give such absolute guarantees for the success which was to come about in the shortest possible time, that he had overcome the objections of the political authorities. That is the way it is stated in the memoirs, and since Secretary of State Zimmermann participated in this session, he may perhaps be able to give us information concerning it.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Certainly, of course, I have a very clear recollection of the session. At the start, Admiral v. Holtzendorff explained his view-point and warmly championed the entrance of Austria-Hungary into the U-boat war. He had a wealth of statistics concerning the whole matter, and assured us that, with the help of the U-boat war, England would at least be brought to the point of becoming inclined toward peace. That he said anything about England being forced to her knees—

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Gave guarantees!

The CHAIRMAN: The word "knee" does not appear.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: He certainly did not use the term "knee." But so far as I recollect, he stated that we will so far get the best of England that she will come to the point of a peace with us. That is what he said. But "guarantees"—I do not recollect the expression.

And then I remember, further, after Admiral . . . spoke, and was much more enthusiastic for the U-boat war than Admiral v. Holtzendorff.¹ Then Mr. Conrad v. Hötzendorf spoke, and he, too, was in favor of the U-boat war. And I, too, voiced my political views. I knew the attitude of my colleague Czernin, and was myself, in truth, no advocate of the U-boat war. But my task here was to support the U-boat war and, after I had, first of all and generally speaking, emphasized the objections which I knew were entertained by Czernin and which were shared by myself, I stated further: "We are not the experts; here are the gentlemen of the Navy who state these matters to us as they are; we have exhausted the means at our command to bring about peace with England and our enemies, and we are now convinced that there is no other method of bringing our enemies

¹ This sentence is garbled in the original print. One line is repeated and one left out.—EDITOR.

to the peace table; I can not ignore the statements which are made to us by our military and naval experts, and must support their view from the standpoint, and taking into consideration the fact that measures, and by this I mean political measures, sufficient to bring our enemies to the point of making peace with us do not exist."

That is about what the procedure was. And then as to Czernin. Whether Czernin spoke before or after I did, I do not exactly remember, probably before I did. In any event, Count Tisza spoke also, who took our view politically. Then the Emperor reserved his decision. That ended the session. Both Admirals, in any event, were very enthusiastic in favor of the U-boat weapon, and Admiral Haus even went so far as considerably to exceed Admiral Holtzendorff in the matter of optimism.

Delegate DR. COHN: I should like to put the following question in connection with a remark made by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg: Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg said that the question must be put thus, whether it was so very much out of the way at that time, at the close of 1916 and at the beginning of 1917, to see in the U-boat war an instrument which might bring about a peace which the Supreme High Command of the Army had at that time described as very improbable, or impossible, of accomplishment by military means. Now in this connection, the question comes up as to what kind of a peace it was that we really wanted to get. And I therefore venture to put the question, whether the political department assumed at that time that peace would ever be possible of attainment on the basis of the conditions which were submitted to the Emperor on the 7th of November and were approved by him with an amendment—conditions which Dr. Helfferich described as very moderate. And particularly in this connection should I like to call the attention of the Imperial Chancellor to the fact that, in spite of the military situation which was described as bad by the Supreme High Command of the Army, in spite of the risk which was involved in the U-boat war, according to the information which we have received here, it was proposed, among other things at that time, to annex Courlandish and Lithuanian territory in such a way that, including the kingdom of Poland, we would acquire a good strategic boundary against Russia, running from north to south; a treaty of commerce with Russia, together with commercial advantages—and in this connection, the Emperor added the amendment that the mining concessions which were guaranteed to England by Russia should be handed over to us; guarantees in Belgium which, if possible, should be established as a result of negotiations with King Albert himself—and if these guarantees which were given were not satisfactory, the annexation of Liège with corresponding land areas. In Belgium, therefore, annexation and certain guarantees. How does this compare with the self-assigned duty of restoration and reparations on the part of the Imperial Chancellor on the 4th of August, 1914? Did the Imperial Government ever believe

that peace with the west could be achieved on the basis of such conditions as these?

The CHAIRMAN: Colleague Cohn, I am of the impression that, in view of the working program which we have set for this session of the committee, such far-reaching questions as this can really not be brought to a decision unless we take into consideration from the outset the report to be given concerning this field. What I mean is that this question can not be solved in passing, for it is altogether too far-reaching. Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg has already assured us that his view was that, even if it had been possible to force England to become inclined to the idea of peace negotiations as the result of the U-boat war, we could only have insisted upon conditions of a very modest sort; that it would have been no peace based on victory, but merely a peace of negotiation; that the objects of negotiation would have been the individual points which would have had to be settled in carrying out such a program, that is, a program which would have been simply a program based on negotiations. We were invited, as you know, by Colonel House himself to make our demands imposing, in order that we would be in a position to oppose the far-reaching demands of the other side with something adequate. The whole question is so far-reaching that we could not possibly finish with it today.

Delegate DR. COHN: I beg your pardon. Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg had, right at this point of the political discussion, apart from the economic results of the U-boat war, described his stand just as I repeated it. What I have read to you are simply those conditions which were considered moderate and which were not to form the basis of a peace based on victory. What were to be understood as the conditions of a peace based on victory, had been designated by the Supreme High Command of the Army, in contrast with these so-called moderate conditions which the Emperor approved. Between the setting out of the conditions and the acquisition of the point of view which Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg has described as his attitude with regard to the U-boat war, there was a period of from six to seven weeks in all. My question is absolutely essential in order to determine whether the political department, at the time when it took its attitude toward the U-boat war, believed that a peace could be obtained, based upon these conditions which were considered moderate.

The CHAIRMAN: If the question could be answered briefly, it might be put in this way: Did the political department take the ground at the time when the unrestricted U-boat war was announced, that these conditions, which were made a matter of common agreement in November with the Supreme High Command of the Army, were the minimum on which we could afford to depend in the way of peace conditions, or were they conditions announced simply for the purposes of negotiation? Were they, then, considered as minimum conditions, or as conditions for the purpose of negotiation?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I have already twice defined my position with regard to peace conditions and with regard to the war aims before this committee. I have already stated, in this connection, that I considered that the establishment of peace conditions and of war aims was a vain thing as long as there was no prospect of the enemy being ready to join us in negotiations. I shall continue to maintain this stand. I believe that, in accordance with the wish expressed by the Chairman, the matter is to be taken up today simply by way of reference, and very briefly.

The CHAIRMAN: With the above statements, I believe that the proceedings are closed for today. Secretary of State (retired) Dr. Helfferich's hearing is also closed—for the time being, for it is always possible that we may come back to one question or another. So we will hold our last session tomorrow, and this will be followed by an adjournment of more or less length. We will, of course, be able to discuss the question of the Gerard banquet further.

The hour of the next session is set at 10 o'clock tomorrow, when we will take the testimony of General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and General Ludendorff.

The session is closed.

The session closed at 7:22 o'clock.

ANNEX

Statement of Witness Secretary of State (retired) Dr. Helfferich concerning the sentence rendered against him on the charge of a refusal to testify

1. On the 15th of November of this year, the committee passed a resolution to sentence me to pay the sum of 300 marks, as well as the costs, occasioned by refusing to testify according to Paragraph 69 of the code of criminal procedure, supposedly because I had refused to give my testimony without legal justification.

I protest against this sentence. In no way have I been guilty of a refusal to testify. I was and remain ready to give the investigating committee, to the extent that I am able to do so, information requested of me in connection with all matters going to the purpose of its investigation, now that the committee has been established. I simply refused to involve myself in questions and answers with Delegate Dr. Cohn. Since any and all information which the committee may desire me to give can be obtained by any other means than by questions put by Delegate Dr. Cohn, it follows that my refusal constitutes no refusal to testify. Aside from the above, I can not recognize any legal obligation on my part to become involved in questions and answers with Delegate Dr. Cohn, even though he is a member of the

subcommittee, neither on the ground of Article 34 of the National Constitution nor on the ground of any penal clause to be applied in accordance with the sense of this article.

2. I gave the reason for my refusal to involve myself in questions and answers with Delegate Dr. Cohn after—not before, but only after, the resolution of the committee which passed sentence upon me on the ground of my having refused to testify—after I was requested to do so by the Chairman. Dr. Cohn has attempted to refute the correctness of the statement given by me as a ground for my action, to the effect that, at the time of Germany's greatest peril, he accepted sums of money coming from the Russian bolshevists from Mr. Joffe, in order to bring about a German revolution. With this attempt of Delegate Dr. Cohn, let me contrast the following sentences from a statement made by him on the 26th of December, 1918, and given out through the W.T.B.:

Is it necessary for me to give circumstantial explanations and reasons why I gladly accepted the moneys which our Russian political friends placed at my disposal through Comrade Joffe for the purposes of the German revolution? I put the money to the use for which it was intended, namely, the spreading abroad of the thought of the revolution, and only regret that circumstances have made it impossible for me to spend the entire sum up to the present time.

Delegate Dr. Cohn called me a liar, in very poorly veiled language, on account of my statement the truth of which is confirmed by his own declaration, and the Chairman interposed no objection to this. In view of the seriousness of the situation with which the investigating committee now has to deal, I will limit myself to the simple establishment of the absolute contradiction between Delegate Dr. Cohn's statement of the 15th of November, 1919, and of his own words on the 26th of December, 1918.

3. Delegate Dr. Cohn, in the session of the 11th instant, declared that the investigation which the committee was carrying on was directed against the members of the former Imperial Government, to have been a member of which I shall invariably and under all conditions look upon in the light of a personal honor. In the session of the 15th instant, he said in terms that could not be misunderstood, that he looked upon me as one coming before the committee as an accused, and that, in his opinion, I was one of those chiefly guilty for the outbreak and the prolongation of the war. Although it is true that the Chairman characterized the announcement of this view as being in conflict with the purposes of the committee, the fact nevertheless remains that this is the view of Delegate Dr. Cohn and, as such, is the view for a member of the committee. Dr. Cohn, whose deep joint guilt in the collapse was the occasion of my refusing to involve myself in question and answer with him, feels, consequently, that his attitude towards me is that of judge. In so doing, he confirms my view that the

investigating committee is a mixture of a criminal court and a parliamentary committee, and that the officials of the old Imperial Government who were called upon to come and testify before it constitute a mixture of witnesses and accused or defendants.

4. For this reason, I consider the application of the provisions of the code of criminal procedure, dealing with compulsory testimony and, in particular, Paragraph 69—quite aside from the statements which I have set out under Paragraph 1—as inapplicable. On the contrary, I consider as applicable the application of the provisions of the code of criminal procedure, to the extent of granting those officers of the earlier Imperial Government who were asked to give their testimony to the committee, the right of challenging members of this committee, in accordance with Paragraph 24 of the code of criminal procedure. I reserve the exercise of this right.

In view of the lack of understanding on the part of the committee itself concerning its own jurisdiction and legal powers, I ask that it refrain from considering applicable the period of time provided by Paragraph 25 of the code of criminal procedure for cases of challenge.

(Signed) DR. HELFFERICH,
Minister of State.

FOURTEENTH SESSION

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1919

The session was opened at 10:15 o'clock, by the Chairman, Delegate Gothein:

The CHAIRMAN: I open the session.

General Field Marshal, the committee would have been glad to spare you the great trouble of appearing before it and, above all, would gladly have spared you the difficulties of your journey in the winter time, but since General Ludendorff placed great importance upon having his testimony taken at the same time that yours was, we could not avoid the necessity of requesting you to appear before us.

Witness GENERAL FIELD MARSHAL V. HINDENBURG: I may be permitted to state that I felt it incumbent upon myself to take my place at the side of my faithful companion in arms during great and troubled days, and that I am grateful that the opportunity has been afforded me to do so. I am also grateful for having had my journey made easier for me.

The CHAIRMAN: May I ask you, General Field Marshal, to step forward and take your oath as a witness.

Witness V. HINDENBURG: I am ready to be sworn, but I should like to have read to you a statement which I consider it my duty to make in this connection.

Witness GENERAL LUDENDORFF: I take the same view as the Field Marshal.

According to Article 34 of the Constitution of August 11, 1919, the National Assembly appointed an investigating committee for the purpose of investigating certain facts prior to and during the war. Both of the undersigned are requested to submit their testimony under oath with regard to their knowledge and to their policy when in Supreme High Command of the Army.

Article 34 of the present Constitution provides that, in connection with the proceedings held before the investigating committee, "the provisions of the code of criminal procedure are to be applied when applicable." But Paragraph 54 of the code of criminal procedure provides:

That every witness is permitted to refuse to testify in answer to questions whose answers would expose him to the danger of criminal proceedings.

Since the proceedings which are held here are not for the purpose of establishing the existence of violations of rules of justice, but of questions dealing with a failure to act in accordance with the rules of expedi-

ency, that is to say, questions whose solution depends upon personal belief, opinions, and points of view, and that the "danger," to use the term provided by the law, of being subjected to judicial proceedings exists in connection with every single sentence,

We, the two undersigned, General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and General of Infantry Ludendorff, announce that we can not look upon ourselves as being bound fundamentally, and as a matter of law, to testify, but that we, as the former Imperial Chancellor Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg and the former representative of the Imperial Chancellor, Dr. Helfferich, have stated, are face to face with an abnormal situation and one which is opposed to the legal conceptions of all civilized countries.

If, at the same time, we have consented to give our testimony and to give it under oath, this is simply because a people as sturdy as the German people have been shown to be, both by their history and by the war which they have carried on for the past four years, have the right to be put in full possession of the information as to how circumstances in reality unfolded themselves and to be put in the position of learning this, unaffected by party hatreds and party bias.

It is only by learning the truth that the German people can recover, and it is for this reason, and for this reason alone, that we are ready to give our testimony under oath.

So far as concerns the conduct of the actual proceedings before the investigating committee, we make the same reservations for ourselves, and, at the same time, for all those officers of the Supreme High Command of the Army who were under our command during the war, which Minister of State Dr. Helfferich set out in his announcement which he delivered to the committee yesterday.

(Signed) V. HINDENBURG.

(Signed) LUDENDORFF.

BERLIN, *November 18, 1919.*

The CHAIRMAN: I can simply state that this is nothing more than the private expression of will on the part of the witnesses. It goes without saying that the mere expression of will of this kind in no way alters the actual situation occupied by the committee, which has been appointed under constitutional regulations.

I assume, however, from what has been stated, that the gentlemen are ready to be sworn as witnesses.

If you will allow me, General Field Marshal.

Your Christian name?

Witness v. HINDENBURG: Paul.

The CHAIRMAN: Your age, if I may ask?

Witness v. HINDENBURG: 72 years.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you desire to take the oath with the religious formula?

Witness v. HINDENBURG: Yes.

(Witness General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg takes the oath as witness.)

The CHAIRMAN: General Ludendorff, will you be good enough to take the oath too?

Your Christian name?

Witness LUDENDORFF: Erich.

The CHAIRMAN: Your age?

Witness LUDENDORFF: 54 years.

The CHAIRMAN: General Ludendorff, will you take the oath with the religious formula?

Witness LUDENDORFF: Of course.

(Witness General of Infantry Ludendorff is sworn as a witness.)

The CHAIRMAN: General Field Marshal, the questions which we propose to ask you have already been submitted to you in writing.

The first of these questions reads as follows: From what point of time on, did the Supreme High Command of the Army consider that the announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war on the 1st of February, 1917, could no longer be postponed, and what were the reasons?

Witness v. HINDENBURG: Before I answer this question, in accordance with my duty, I should like to be allowed to read the following sketch giving the reasons for our whole mode of thought, action, and policy during the period of the war, for this was the foundation upon which everything which we did was based.

The CHAIRMAN: General, it was our intention to forego the reading of written articles of any length, or of analytical statements, since the only thing which concerns us here is the establishment of facts. I do not know to what extent these expositions which you desire to read to us have to do only with the establishment of facts. It has been definitely decided in the course of repeated announcements made by the committee, that opinion judgments must be absolutely eliminated so far as the witnesses are concerned, and that also members of the committee are under the obligation of refraining from the expression of all such opinions at this stage.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: I will only give historic data, but I consider it absolutely essential to recall them to the memory of you gentlemen in this short summary.

When we were appointed to the Supreme High Command of the Army the World War had been going on for two years. Events which occurred after the 29th of August, 1916, must not be judged except in connection with those which preceded this date.

The war between Germany and Austria-Hungary, on the one hand, and Russia, France and Serbia and, shortly thereafter, Belgium, England and Japan, on the other, had increased in extent. In 1915, Italy, and in 1916, Roumania, entered the conflict on the side of our enemies. With this, the war ceased to have any further counterpart in history. Territory covered approached the limits of the gigantic, the masses of armed men reached numbers hitherto unconceived, and the technical feature attained a predominating significance. War and world economics were intertwined to an extent which had never existed heretofore. The comparative numbers for

fighting purposes, of machines and ammunition, and of economic resources had been, and this had been true from the very beginning, as unfavorable as possible for us. At no time were the intangible elements of war so difficult to sustain, such as the morale of the troops and the requirements made upon central and local leadership; and, in a word, never was the minority given so tremendous a burden to bear, as in the course of this war. The Supreme High Command of the Army had to meet the calls of this fundamental characteristic of the war; it was upon the meeting of its requirements that our ceaseless endeavors were centered. Upborne by the love of our country, we had but one purpose; to keep the German Empire and the German people, as far as human endeavor and military means could do so, safe from harm, and to guide it by military methods to the point of obtaining a satisfactory peace. In order to carry out this tremendous task, undertaken under these tremendous difficulties, we were bound to maintain the rock-ribbed will to conquer. But this will to conquer was inextricably bound up in the assurance that we were in the right. And with all this, we were well aware that we were bound to succumb in the unequal conflict unless the combined forces of the people at home were directed toward victory on the field of battle, and unless the morale of the Army were continuously fed from home. The will to conquer, of course, did not manifest itself to us as a matter of a purely personal determination, but as an expression of the will of the people. If we had not had this will to conquer, or had not naturally assumed that it existed in the hearts of the people, we would not have undertaken our difficult duties. A general who is not willing to fight in order to gain victory for his country should take over no command, or, if he does so, only with the simultaneous duty of capitulating. No such duty as this was imposed upon us. If it had been, we should have refused to accept the Supreme High Command of the Army.

The German General Staff is based upon the teachings of the great war philosopher Clausewitz. Accordingly, we look upon war as nothing but the continuation of politics, by dint of other means than those of statesmanship, that is, by force of arms. Our peace policy had failed. We desired no war, and yet came to be faced with the greatest—

The CHAIRMAN: Just a minute! This is an expression of opinion, and I should like to call attention to the fact that expressions of opinion are to be eliminated from the testimony of witnesses. So I protest against this sentence.

Witness v. HINDENBURG:—with the greatest, the most difficult, and the bitterest that history has ever known. How it came to be such, is a matter which history must decide. But I know one thing with absolute certainty: The German people did not want the war, the German Emperor did not want the war, the Government did not want the war, and certainly the General Staff did not want it, for the Staff knew better than anyone else

what a terrifically difficult position we would occupy in a war against the Entente. For the central military authorities to prepare for the possibility of a war which was, perhaps, unavoidable was certainly their duty so far as the people were concerned. That was what they were there for. And in the same way, they were under the obligation, in case a war turned out to be unavoidable, and in the course of the war itself, to make use of every possible chance.

We considered it to be our primary duty to end the war by military means as quickly as possible and as favorably to ourselves as possible, in order to make it possible for the political department, as soon as it could in any way be done, to again bring the life of the country into tune with the normal and peaceful methods of statesmanship. This conception is the natural conception; it set the standard for the conduct of the war, and calls for no explanation. During the World War, we came to recognize the fact, and the recognition of this fact was with us every minute, that the superiority of the enemy in human and inanimate war material was great, that the losses would have to assume, according to any and all estimates, such unexampled proportions, even if the war terminated relatively favorably to us, that this wastage would be equivalent to an unfortunate outcome of the war. If it was true that love of country and of people forced us to end the war as quickly as possible, it was equally true that our sense of compulsion in this regard was all the more sharply felt as the result of the reasons above given.

We knew what we would have to demand of the Army, of the officers of the highest and lower ranks, and, not least of all, of the man in the grey coat, and we know what they have all done. But in spite of the tremendous demands that were made upon the troops and upon leadership, in spite of the superiority of the enemy in point of numbers, we could have fought out the unequal conflict to a favorable termination if determined and unanimous cooperation on the part of those in the armies and those at home had been the case. It was in this circumstance that we discerned the means of gaining a victory for the German cause, on the attainment of which our minds were firmly set.

But what was it that happened? Whereas on the side of the enemy, in spite of their superiority in man-power and in material, members of all political parties and of all classes of the population became ever firmer fixed in their will to conquer, and, as a matter of fact, the more firm the more difficult the situation with which they were confronted, in our case, where, situated as we were, this concentrated resolution was a matter of greater necessity, divergent party interests were felt—

The CHAIRMAN (interrupting): General Field Marshal, we are now dealing with opinion judgments which are being rendered with regard to the people of the country. The committee has passed resolutions stating that opinions of this kind are not to be given. As much as I regret the fact, I can make

no exception in the case of the General Field Marshal with regard to those resolutions which have been repeatedly made by the committee, not only unanimously but inspired by the same motive on the part of all. So that I shall have to ask you to omit such passages.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: And these circumstances very soon brought about a splitting-up and disintegration of the will to conquer.

The CHAIRMAN: That also is an expression of opinion, against which I protest.

(Commotion among the audience.)

Today there are a number of persons present in the audience who, possibly, have no knowledge of the announcements which have already been made by my predecessor, which were to the effect that all expressions of approval or disapproval should be avoided. I beg to call attention to the fact that I shall observe the rules of order strictly, and that, if expressions of disapproval should be manifested by the audience or by the press, the hall will be inevitably ordered cleared by me, and those members of the press who participate in such expressions of approval or disapproval, I shall proceed to deprive of their passes. I have thought it fitting to inform you of this at this time, so that everyone will be in a position to act accordingly.

I shall now ask the General Field Marshal to continue.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: History will render its final judgment with regard to those matters concerning which I am to speak no further here. At that time, we still believed that the will to conquer over-rode every other consideration. When we took command, we submitted to the government a number of proposals, the purpose of which was to concentrate all our national forces for the purpose of bringing about an early termination of the war, and one that would be favorable to us; these proposals explained to the government the gigantic tasks which were ahead of us. However, we all know what the fate of our proposals came to be, and that this was, again, due in part to political influences. What I sought to obtain was strong and cheerful cooperation, and I was met with weakness and a refusal to act.

The CHAIRMAN: That, too, is an expression of opinion, against which I must emphatically protest.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: From this moment on, we were never free from anxiety as to whether or not our people at home would stand fast until the war was won. Again and again we raised our voices in a warning directed to the government. It was at this time that plans were set on foot for the secret and deliberate disintegration of both fleet and army, as a step in furtherance of similar phenomena which had existed in times of peace. The results of these efforts during the last year of the war were not withheld from the knowledge of the Supreme High Command of the Army. The brave troops which kept themselves free from the contact of revolutionary deterioration were hard put to it, as the result of the mutinous attitude of their

revolutionary comrades; they were called upon to bear the whole burden of the conflict. (Bell of the chairman; commotion and interruptions.)

The CHAIRMAN: Pray proceed, General.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: The purposes which the leaders contemplated became now impossible to carry out. Our repeated exhortations on behalf of strict discipline and the strict application of the laws met with no results. So our operations were bound to fail, and the collapse was bound to come; the revolution was but the keystone. (Commotion and interruptions.)

An English general has said, with justice: "The German Army was stabbed in the back." No blame is to be attached to the sound core of the Army. Its performances call, like that of the officers' corps, for our equal admiration. It is perfectly plain on whom the blame lies. If any further proof were necessary to show it, it is to be found in the statement made by the British general and in the utter amazement of our enemies at their victory.

Speaking generally, that is the story of the tragic way in which the war developed for Germany, after a number of successes on numerous fronts more brilliant than have ever been known, and after performances both by army and by nation which are beyond all praise. These outstanding facts must be plainly understood in order that a correct judgment can be rendered with regard to the military measures which we adopted.

For the rest, I desire to state that General Ludendorff and I have always agreed in all matters involving great resolves, and have always worked in the greatest harmony. We have borne our common share of anxiety and responsibility. And here, too, we jointly appear before you as those who stood for the ideas and methods of the Supreme High Command of the Army ever since August 29, 1916.

The CHAIRMAN: May I now ask you to take up the matter of answering the questions which are to be put?

Question 1 is as follows: From what point of time on did the Supreme High Command of the Army consider that the announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war on the 1st of February could no longer be postponed, and what were the reasons therefor?

If you please, General.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: From the time that we took over the Supreme High Command of the Army, on August 29, 1916, we considered that the unrestricted U-boat war was essential, and this meant the doing away with those restrictions which had, up to that time, hindered the progress of the U-boat war. General Ludendorff will go into further details concerning the matter, since he has put our views in writing. I shall, therefore, ask you to question General Ludendorff on this point. Moreover, this information is available in the records of the committee which, in addition to this, contain information concerning further developments. To this I need add but the following:

At the beginning of December, 1916, we could see that, by the end of January or the beginning of February, 1917, it was possible for the Army and Navy to finish their preparations for the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war. It was our duty to conduct such a U-boat war, since there were no other means at our disposal for coming to the help of the hard-pressed western front, and for making our enemies, by belligerent methods, willing to consider peace. Moreover, this was the only way which could have resulted in the termination of the war if the peace proposal failed. Were we to put up quietly with the fact that our sons and brothers on the western front were to be torn to pieces by American shells; were we to look upon the fact with equanimity that, at home, our wives and children were brought face to face with starvation as the result of the blockade of our cruel opponents? If not, the U-boat war was the only instrumentality by which we could oppose these measures.

The CHAIRMAN: General Ludendorff!

Witness LUDENDORFF: I shall also ask you to note my statements. I can only speak from memory. I only received the documents which have a bearing on this situation, night before last. It was not possible for me to study these records individually.

The CHAIRMAN: Let me make one statement: I gave instructions as far back as Saturday that these records should be sent to the General.

Witness LUDENDORFF: As I have stated, I did not receive them until night before last. It follows, as I have already remarked, that my statements are bound, for the most part, to be made from memory. It is true that I had some material myself. In the main, I shall limit myself to explanatory statements concerning the actions and the policy of the Supreme High Command of the Army.

When the General Field Marshal and I took over the Supreme High Command of the Army, the situation was very serious. This was the view which was commonly taken at that time by the German people, and was shared by the domestic and foreign press.

In the west, the attrition battle of Verdun dragged along. On the Somme, and since July 1, the battle roared. The battle of the Somme was the first real battle of war material. The Isonzo front held firm, but only as the result of the most desperate efforts. In the east, as the result of the failure of the Austrian troops around Lodz and on the Dniester to hold, the front had begun to give way; and at that time it had not been firmly restored. In Macedonia, after the preliminary successes of the Bulgarians, a reaction had started which was very seriously felt. Then, at that point, the Roumanians entered the picture. All Hungary lay exposed before them, and in the Dobrudja alone there were weak forces in the process of concentration.

On the front, we were opposing the enemy in the proportion of 6 to 10, roughly estimated. Our supply of war material was insufficient, and our

supply of ammunition too scant, and, in cold, plain terms, this meant heavy losses of German lives which, from all points of view, simply could not be replaced.

Following close upon our meeting at Pless, the question of the unrestricted U-boat war was brought up by the Imperial Chancellor and the Chief of the Admiralty Staff. What the General Field Marshal and I thought at that time, with regard to the U-boat question, is to be found in the records, which, as I said, I only received yesterday or day before yesterday. General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg expressed himself as follows:

We would shout with joy if we could begin the U-boat war immediately, but it is a very serious question. We should have to take into consideration the possibility of new declarations of war and of landings in Holland and Denmark. A number of divisions would become tied up there which we are not now in a position to spare. Our allies are not to be trusted. The future is now darker than ever. We shall have to let some time pass. . . .

The further statements are immaterial.

During the World War, in which we fought against tremendous odds, it was a monstrous piece of misfortune that our Navy, with such fine forces as it contained, lay practically idle. It is true that it kept the Baltic open and, in so doing, rendered notable services for the economic phase of the war. And the marine corps, too, was fighting bravely in Flanders; but the fact is none the less true that we did not get the benefit from the Navy, that important element of armed force, which should be the case in a war carried on with all arms. And this fact, too, emphasized our inferiority in numbers. The economic life of our enemies really suffered no blow at all. It is true that we had attempted to make use of the fleet to better advantage in connection with the U-boats; but, as the result of Wilson's note, the U-boat war had been burdened with restrictions to such an extent that the results were no longer proportionate to the forces put into operation. In opposition herewith, England, by means of her fleet and in violation of international law, was carrying out her hunger blockade, which at that time and in connection with her propaganda inflicted such serious wounds and even had an ill effect upon the unborn child. So that in this way her fleet became an effective instrument of warfare, even if it remained in its harbors. The blockade was only possible if the United States agreed to it, and the United States gave its tacit consent, although Wilson had already characterized the blockade as unlawful. England cared little for this expression of opinion. So that our unhappy plight bears witness at once to the barbarous conduct of the war by England and the unneutral attitude of the United States. And in this connection I remind you that commissions from England searched ships which were leaving for Europe, in American harbors, in order to prevent any supplying whatsoever of Germany. The United

States went further in their support of the Entente. I remind you of the shells which were manufactured in the United States, and which bore the American mark of manufacture; and I remember the righteous anger which at that time was bound to flame in every soldier's heart. American military missions were not welcomed at the front; it was only as the result of direct pressure brought to bear by the Supreme High Command of the Army that they were accepted. No soldier believed in the honest neutrality of the United States and of its President. We instinctively sensed the economic interests which bound up the enormous fortunes in the United States with England's conduct of the war. Unfortunately, public opinion in Germany was not so clearly informed with regard to the pernicious attitude of the United States as, in my opinion, it ought to have been. The attitude of the United States on the question of the blockade and munitions of war had already been severely criticized by Ambassador Count Bernstorff as early as April, 1915. We must realize what this attitude was, in order to form a correct judgment bearing on the entrance of the United States into the war. The so-called inexhaustible resources of the United States had already been placed at the disposal of the Entente to the extent that human power could supply them. If, after the declaration of war, war industries developed still more, this circumstance was, after all, the positive result of the economic upheavals in the Entente countries by the U-boat war, and a pure matter of business. I should ask that experts, persons who know the United States, and, above all, experts who have been in the United States, be heard on this question which, from military standpoint, is important in the extreme.

I will not go into the question of the conduct of the U-boat war prior to the 29th of August. I assume that the point will be the matter of protracted investigation for the purpose of determining whether or not a great military mistake was made in putting off the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war until too late. So far as the General Field Marshal and I were concerned, the reason for the attitude that we took with regard to the U-boat war at the close of August which opposed the view of the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, was simply the fact that the Imperial Chancellor considered the possibility of a hostile attitude on the part of Denmark and Holland as the result of pressure exerted by England, and because we did not have a single spare man for frontier guards.

That was the general world situation, when the Field Marshal and I were called upon to take the Supreme High Command of the Army supported by the obvious will and expectation on the part of the entire nation to conquer. And from the press too, on all sides, we were bound to assume this to be the case.

It is probable that there were but few at that time who looked upon a victory of German arms as undesirable because of apprehension of the

so-called reaction and the much-maligned militarism. But such persons existed, nevertheless. I remind you of the statements which are supposed to have been published in the *Vorwärts* which quite frankly announced as a recognized fact the circumstance that an absolute victory for the Empire would not be in accord with the interests of social democracy. (Bell of the Chairman.)

The CHAIRMAN: General, I should really like to ask you to limit yourself to those facts which are absolutely necessary for purposes of information, and that you abstain from taking up any and all statements which are supposed to have been published in the press. That would lead us too far afield.

Witness LUDENDORFF: I will limit myself to saying what I consider absolutely necessary. But, in view of the fact that I have referred to one statement by the press, I desire to announce most emphatically that, in making this reference, I had in mind no one but the leaders of the Socialists and agitators, and did not include the working classes, who performed their duty brilliantly. (Bell of the Chairman.)

The CHAIRMAN: This really has nothing to do with the case. I shall have to ask you to limit your statements to facts and to refrain from expressions of opinion and from personal judgments. As I have already told the General, this request is based on a resolution which has been repeatedly and unanimously taken by the committee, and is, moreover, in accordance with the instructions which the committee has received from the Constitution.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: May I be allowed to speak?

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: The committee was unanimous in reaching its resolution with regard to personal judgments. In my capacity as expert, I feel that it is my duty to announce that I, at least—I do not know how the matter stands with my colleagues—took no part in that resolution as an expert. That personal judgments constitute the expression of personal views, and that the application of an opinion is a matter concerning which people can differ, is a matter of common knowledge, and has been proved by the very events to which we have all been witnesses. I feel that it is my duty as an expert to announce my view as follows: If the decision of what constitutes a personal judgment lies with one man only, such as the Chairman for instance, I can not look upon these proceedings as such as to lead to the result—a result which it is my duty, announced under oath, to endeavor to help to bring about—the result of making the whole truth perfectly clear. We can not completely avoid personal judgments in the course of attempting to establish facts. So that, in my capacity as expert I protest against this resolution of the committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to state at the outset that, of course, experts have nothing to do with the resolutions reached by the committee and that, consequently, the expert who has just spoken entertains a completely erro-

neous idea with regard to his powers, as is shown by his statement that he finds himself unable to recognize this resolution taken by the committee as binding. If the expert in question believes that it is not possible for him to accept a resolution of the committee which has been repeatedly and unanimously taken, and with which he has absolutely nothing to do, he is at perfect liberty to resign his office as expert. On the other hand, I must protest against any expert, whose offices here are limited to those of an expert only, criticising resolutions which have been unanimously adopted by the committee.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: May I be permitted to speak?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: For my part, I have to announce that the purpose of the expert in being present is to assist in arriving at the truth. In my opinion, we can not arrive at the truth if the decision as to what constitutes personal judgments is, in this manner, to lie in the hands of a single person. I believe that personal judgments can not be avoided, and that it is the duty of the expert to call attention to this fact; otherwise, it will not be possible to arrive at the truth. According to my view, I am not in error in regard to this matter, but on the contrary, it is the Chairman of the committee who is in error on the point. I am well aware of the fact that my duties are not such as to call upon me to cooperate in the adoption of resolutions by the committee; and this is a point concerning which I need no information.

The CHAIRMAN: In response to this very extraordinary view announced by the expert, the committee will withdraw at this point for the purpose of passing upon the question. (Laughter.)

The Committee withdraws into conference at 10:51 o'clock.

The Committee resumed the public hearings at 11:45 o'clock.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, the committee has passed the following resolution with regard to the statement made by Expert Privy Councilor Schaefer:

The expert has no right in any way to criticise the proceedings or the resolutions of the subcommittee, or to oppose the rulings of the chairman. To the extent that the statements of Professor Dr. Schaefer constitute such a criticism or such contradiction, those statements are censured herewith.

This resolution was taken with but one dissenting vote. The further provision is as follows:

The expert has the right to make suggestions for the purpose of explaining situations, to make proposals and to put questions. The expert neither can nor shall be restricted in the exercise of this right.

This section was made the matter of unanimous resolution.

Witness V. HINDENBURG: I have been informed that certain of my remarks which I have ventured to make in the course of picturing to you the general situation, have been construed as directed against the former government. I consider it the part of duty and honor to state that that was not my purpose. We were constantly keenly aware of the endless difficulties with which the then government had to contend, and I announce herewith that it was not my purpose to make any statements derogatory of the government. My desire was limited to the wish to describe the general situation.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: As expert, I consider it my duty to announce that the matters which are here the subject of investigation are of importance from the standpoint of the world's history and that, in such matters, inquiries must always be made with regard to motives and reasons. Without them, it is impossible to recognize the truth. The extent to which this is to be done must be a matter for the expert to determine, for, in my opinion, that is the province of the expert historian, to wit, to explain to what extent, in general, historic events and the world situation have influenced individual resolves. We are taking the testimony of men who were placed in control of various phases of our national existence and whose conclusions were reached in the closest possible connection with the general situation. It is my conviction as an expert that their right to express their views with regard to these things can not justly be infringed upon.

The CHAIRMAN: The powers of the expert have been clearly and completely set out in the last clause of the announcement of the committee. I shall now ask General Ludendorff to continue.

Witness LUDENDORFF: It is a matter of some importance for me, too, to show in what way our minds turned at that time. The General Field Marshal and I hoped that we and the whole nation were of one and the same mind in fighting our way on to victory. But as a matter of fact, there were already certain currents of feeling among the people which did not flow in this direction and which we had to take into consideration in determining the stand which we would adopt with regard to the U-boat war. It was for this reason that I made my announcement, and I shall continue to proceed with it.

I must, to my regret, make a second announcement which makes this matter plain, and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Walter Rathenau made this statement when he spoke somewhat as follows: "That moment will never come when the Emperor, as the conqueror of the world and surrounded by his paladins, will pass under the Brandenburg Gate, mounted on his white war horse. For upon such a day the world's history would have gone mad." So that there were currents of feeling already in existence among the German people, which did not flow in accordance with the intention of the Supreme High Command of the Army to fight on to victory, and so we were bound to take these movements into consideration.

As the result of tremendous efforts on the part of the troops and of their leaders following the date when the General Field Marshal and I took over the Supreme High Command of the Army, the military situation was restored. At the same time, we constructed reserve positions in the west in order to be better protected against possible counter-strokes. The Navy supported the conduct of war on land by again sending out the U-boats to carry the war on commerce over the greatest areas possible. Moreover, we had to adopt measures of security to cover the further conduct of the war. I remind you of our proposals to get more levies, the auxiliary service law, and the Hindenburg program for the better information of the nation, as well as for the undertaking of a stronger policy of propaganda against the enemy. All these propositions had but the one military end and aim, and that was to terminate the conflict as soon and as favorably as possible for the German people. What the General Field Marshal and I thought in those days with regard to the U-boat war, and how we felt in respect to the conduct of the war in general, you can see from the conversation which I, as representative of the Supreme High Command of the Army, had with Captain v. Bülow, who was the representative of those conducting naval operations, which has been recalled to my attention by the material which the committee has submitted to me. Captain v. Bülow has reported it as follows:

Ludendorff regretted the fact that the question (that is, the question of the U-boat war) had come into the political arena, since he regarded it as a purely military matter. He, for his part, must be guided by the decision of the Premier (with regard to the attitude of the neutral States); that his judgments were invariably based upon actual conditions and circumstances.

Further on:

Ludendorff meant the actual situation which bore upon our military strength. If the Chancellor told him that a danger existed that Denmark might become one of our enemies, he could not afford to ignore this because a different assumption was entertained. The west front was calling for reserves. He could only say "yes" to us, and would do so with pleasure, when he was assured that all our fronts could be held; that he had been obliged to risk much when planning battles, but that when he did so he had always been convinced that success would follow. It must be perfectly clear to everybody that our military situation is bad today.

And still further:

Such a bluff would not be audacity, but folly, and he would not do it.

While we were busy with the conduct of the war and with securing the means for carrying on the war further, the Imperial Chancellor came to us in

September with the idea of a peace mediation by Wilson. We agreed. I know with what anxiety, and also with what skepticism, we waited to see whether Wilson would really make a peace proposal. When it did not come, we were not surprised, since we were well aware of the intimate commercial obligations of the United States to England. When the Imperial Chancellor then suggested the peace proposal of the Central Powers, we gave him our loyal support. We did that with all the more earnestness because we knew the desire and the wish of the Supreme Commander in Chief to bring peace to the German people and to spare the Army another winter campaign. His Majesty the Emperor spoke in such glowing terms of the responsibility which, as the monarch, he conscientiously felt toward his people and toward God, that we were all the more set in our determination to bring about intelligent cooperation. We sought, as far as possible, to overcome the military weak points which existed in the very fact that we made our peace proposal, by having it go out only after Bucharest was taken and after the auxiliary service law was passed. In this regard also we were in complete accord with the Imperial Chancellor, and even with regard to the text of the proposal.

We had our doubts as to the result of the proposal, since the enemy's situation did not involve any compelling reason for them to make peace. It is true that the enemy had suffered severely, that his losses had been enormous, and that his plans had collapsed, but the enemy peoples still appeared to be healthy in mind. Lloyd George was the leading man in England, and in these days became so officially. It was clear that any inclination for peace which existed in England would be eliminated by the appointment of Lloyd George. Whoever would form an estimate of the character of this man would have to conclude that it was he who was leading his people, and not the people who were guiding him, and that he would not lay down the sword until England had either come to the end of her strength or had reached her goal, to wit, the destruction of Germany, and Germany's commercial servitude. In this thought, Lloyd George was at one with his nation.

Recently, an Englishman with pacific tendencies called upon me. I got the impression that he looked upon England's supremacy at sea as a pure matter of course.

I did not have such a clear picture of France. There was the energetic statesman Clemenceau. France's attitude did not seem to me to be of such importance. At that time, it was England that was the driving power, and her supreme court had announced our destruction, in a decision which it rendered, to this effect: The destruction of Germany's commercial prosperity is England's purpose in this war.

During the preparation of the peace proposal, the Field Marshal and I, in agreement with the Chief of the General Staff, had decided to insist upon

the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war in February, 1917, in case our peace proposal was rejected, since, up to that time, we would have available the troops from Roumania for use against Denmark and Holland, should these countries be forced into war against us by England. This had not yet been the case in August. Our position at the beginning of December was as follows: In spite of the brilliant victory in Roumania and in spite of the brave defense in the west, the situation continued to remain very serious on the Isonzo and in Macedonia. As had been the case with the enemy, the man-power which was used was of extraordinary extent. In Transylvania and Roumania, a new front had come to be established, for which troops were needed. We had had to go so far in order to reach the shortest line, and to get control of Wallachia with its supplies of grain and oil. It was only by so doing that we could continue to exist. In the coming winter, we could raise but few new formations and only at the cost of the levies of other divisions. Russia called for particular attention in this regard, and France still had an impressive reserve of man-power in its colonies. The enemy's superiority in war material was not diminished in any respect, and this meant, of course, more loss in human lives. Before Hindenburg's program could become effective, months would have to pass. The auxiliary service law soon showed itself to be a miscarriage of the worse sort. At the beginning, it made a good impression on the outside, in that it appeared to be a manifestation of a cheerful determination to proceed with the further conduct of the war.

The worst feature was the physical exertion which the troops had to undergo. It was so great as to constitute a real increase of the general disadvantages, which had assumed important proportions as the result of the superiority in war material and numbers. But as yet the morale at the front was unbroken. Of course, the situation was such that we could not hope to come out victorious by dint of land warfare alone. The best that we could hope for was to cripple the enemy's will to conquer by our methods of defense. That meant an endless war under very great difficulties so far as we were concerned, taking into consideration our unfortunate economic situation. And in this connection, we had to expect that our troops would no longer be able to endure the effect of the enemy's tremendous superiority in the way of war material, as shown at the battle of the Somme, and to realize that they might be thrown back on enemy territory in the east and west. We had to admit that it was possible that we might lose the war, and that meant that we could not bring the Entente to the point of considering peace. In order to attain our aim of terminating the war as quickly and as favorably to ourselves as possible, if the peace proposal brought no results, we were bound to try out everything that could be done in our situation. And in so doing, we had to study the morale of the country. According to the judgment of the Navy, we were in possession of an instrumentality in the

shape of the intensified U-boat war, which could bring us relief and which could preserve German lives and carry us to ultimate victory. In view of the situation in which we found ourselves, it was a duty which we owed the German nation and the Army to make use of the unrestricted U-boat war if the peace proposal was not accepted.

On December 8, we expressed our views once more to the Imperial Chancellor and designated at that time, that is to say, the beginning of September [*sic*], the end of January as the time for launching the unrestricted U-boat war. On December 12, the peace proposal was made public to the world. We undertook to explain the situation to the Army. An order of the Emperor, drawn up in forceful terms, informed it of the peace proposal. The explanation of the situation to those at home was a matter which devolved upon the Imperial Chancellor. As to how deeply and generally the Supreme High Command of the Army considered methods for keeping the people informed, appears in various documents which we sent to the Imperial Chancellor in those days. For instance, a letter of the 13th of September, in which we proposed a far-reaching armament program, closes with these words: "I have no doubt that, if the seriousness of the situation is explained to our people—and this must be done—they will show themselves to be in accord. If they do not, Germany would not deserve to conquer." On the 23d of October, we suggested that the Reichstag be informed of our situation in all its seriousness. I assume that that was done. But to have commented in the press about the seriousness of our military situation would have been a grave error, in my estimation. In spite of all the precautions which we took, the result of our peace proposal was that it was taken as a manifestation of weakness. In this connection, I refer to Count Bernstorff's statements touching his talk with Lansing, and to numerous announcements by the press of enemy and neutral countries. Were we to increase this impression of our weakness? In that case, our proposal would all the more certainly have been doomed to failure.

In all possible ways we endeavored to cooperate with the Imperial Chancellor in matters looking toward the giving of information on the general situation.

The War Press Bureau and the censorship were the most hated of all the governmental agencies. Both agencies were the object of unending criticism, which was, above all, traced to those who were not acquainted with this organization or with the many-headed organization of the press, which lacked unified management just as did the news division of the government.

The CHAIRMAN: May I interrupt you, General, for a moment? The committee has decided to reserve the question of the war news, etc., for a special investigation. So that, in my opinion, it is now expedient to pass over these matters, because the whole question of the War Press Bureau and of the censorship are to be made the subject of a special investigation.

Witness LUDENDORFF: I agree to this if I am allowed to speak about this matter at some other time. But during these proceedings it has been stated that the military branch did not work in unison with the Imperial Chancellor. At least, I assume that to be the case, judging by the newspaper reports. And then again, a suspicion was expressed to the effect that we might have carried on a policy of obstruction. For this reason I believe that I have the right to go into this matter here, and for this reason I state that that was never the case. We continually worked in absolute accord with the Imperial Chancellor and supported his policies to the best of our knowledge and with the best will in the world with respect to the people at large. I hope that I shall have the opportunity of going into the matter in detail.

The CHAIRMAN: To the extent that what you have to say is material to the question which is now before us, you are, of course, at liberty to testify concerning this at the present time. I simply assumed that you wanted to go into the question of the press and the censorship in detail at the present moment.

Witness LUDENDORFF: No, no.

The CHAIRMAN: It was for this reason that I desired to call to your attention in advance that this question would be made the subject of special proceedings.

Witness LUDENDORFF: It was my desire to make a series of quite definite statements which I believed would be of considerable interest to the committee, in order that the committee can get a clear conception of what the conditions actually were; for up to the present time you gentlemen have no clear idea of the situation.

The CHAIRMAN: Then continue, if you please.

Witness LUDENDORFF: Just now the newspapers are commenting on the collegial character of that bureau. I wish that that could have happened earlier; for in such case, public opinion would not have been disturbed. Every agency came into communicative contact with the press without any influence being exercised by the Supreme High Command of the Army or the War Press Bureau, respectively. I make a particular point of asserting that the War Press Bureau did not assume an attitude of superiority to the corresponding organizations of other agencies, nor to the representation of the Admiralty Staff either. So far as the censorship was concerned, it was confronted with a situation all its own. The trouble was that, apparently, the fiction was maintained that we had no political censorship. So the government made use of the military authorities. The highest censorship authorities were not always strong enough to set such inquiries right with regard to the outside. Only such orders came from us as had to do with war and battle. It came to the point that no one wanted to relieve us of the censorship. It was too simple a matter to get one's fingers burned.

I want to state that we found this arrangement already existing when the General Field Marshal and I entered the Supreme High Command of the Army. So we did not create it; but it would have been necessary anyhow. In the spring of 1917, I asked the Minister of War to take over the censorship. I had no success in this. In October, 1918, when the Minister of Information was appointed—I believe that was his title—the then Minister Erzberger refused to take over the censorship; it came under the control of the War Press Bureau. The censorship belongs to those arrangements which are called into existence by the General Staff and which the General Staff was bound to maintain because nobody else did so. So that we found these conditions existing when we entered the Supreme High Command of the Army. I will show you from my own experience how the Supreme High Command of the Army was relied upon in matters which really had nothing to do with its duties. I must go into this because, in the course of the statements which have been made here, it has been represented that we had our fingers in too many matters. When the instigations and harangues of the Navy and the Army by the Independent Social Democrats—

The CHAIRMAN: I shall have to ask you not to express yourself in the form of such sharp personal judgments.

General LUDENDORFF: Well, may I request to be told the difference between a personal judgment and the mere assertion of a fact?

The CHAIRMAN: There is a difference, and that consists in not criticizing the announcements made by and the attitude of individual political parties in an injurious manner. And I should further like to call your attention to the fact that this committee is, of course, composed of members of all parties, just as is the case with the National Assembly. The duty devolves upon me as the Chairman to protect all the members of this committee, as well as all the members of the National Assembly. In my opinion, it is not possible to observe, in such case, a sharp distinction between those members who are sitting in this committee and those who are not members of it. I should, therefore, like to urge especially upon the General to refrain, on his part, from severe statements of that kind.

Witness LUDENDORFF: I shall be very glad to do so, but I should like to emphasize the fact that I have made a statement under oath, to hide nothing; and that, in so doing, I should not be proceeding in accordance with the dictates of my conscience.

The CHAIRMAN: The oath refers to the concealment of facts, not to the concealment of personal opinions.

Witness LUDENDORFF: I do not care to answer this point.

So the Supreme High Command of the Army requested that an agency be created to ascertain the connection of the revolutionary activities with Russia and to follow them up. The establishment of such a defensive agency was recommended to the government. The latter refused and

turned over to the General Staff the duty of establishing such an agency. It seemed to me as if the government did not want to mix up in such affairs for fear of bringing itself into the black books of one political party. The Supreme High Command of the Army, therefore, created this office in the late autumn of 1917, which succeeded in collecting very valuable and extremely tragic data. The task of following this up remained in the hands of the government which, however—this is my view—did not carry it out. The name of Joffe, the Russian consulates in a number of cities, and the sad results for both army and country, are well known. I refrain from further remarks on the point.

In the answers of the Entente to our peace proposal was heard the voice of Lloyd George demanding our destruction. It was plain very shortly after this proposal was sent that it was going to fail. Even while we were awaiting the official reply, Wilson was making his proposals for a peace in which there was to be neither conqueror nor conquered. The handling of the Wilson peace move was a matter which concerned the Imperial Chancellor only. At the front—I believe on the 15th of December—there was a heavy enemy attack at Verdun which was very costly. Defeat once more raised a warning—

The CHAIRMAN: One moment! Is this anticipating the second question?

Witness LUDENDORFF: Possibly, but I believe that the understanding of the second question will be facilitated.

The CHAIRMAN: Then it will be necessary to read the second question. Do you wish, General, to answer all the questions in order?

Witness LUDENDORFF: No, I should prefer to proceed in sequence.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee agrees to that, so that I will now read the further questions: The second question is as follows:

Did the Supreme High Command of the Army know of the reasons urged in opposition to the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, particularly the reasons which were contained in the statements of Under-Secretaries of State Haniel and Albert? Why did the Supreme High Command of the Army consider that those reasons which were urged against the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war were not sound?

I consider it essential, at this point, to read the most important passages from the statements of Under-Secretaries of State v. Haniel and Albert above cited. They must be made part of our protocol. For this reason, and right now, in connection with the reading of this second question, I should like to have read those passages which are to be found in both these statements. I ask that these passages be read.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Letter of Counselor of Legation v. Haniel to Minister v. Treutler.

Delegate DR. COHN: The date?

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: November 10, 1916.

But otherwise, the feeling, above all in high society and in the press, is, as you know, almost exclusively "pro-Ally." In view of the close connection with England, from the standpoint of history, blood, speech, society, finance, culture, etc.—and, in many of these relations, also with France—this should cause no particular surprise. And in addition to this there are Belgium, the *Lusitania*, and the fact that here we are considered responsible for the war, in spite of all proofs to the contrary. Notwithstanding his commercial instincts, the American is *very* sentimental—often hysterically so—and in the case referred to commercial instinct and sentiment point in the same direction. However inconceivable and disgusting this attitude may appear to us, we shall have to reckon with it. Asquith described the one-sided point of view, and not incorrectly at that, when he said: "Let the neutrals complain about our blockade and other measures taken as much as they may, the fact remains that no neutral national has ever lost his life as the result of it."

Since the "armistice" in the U-boat war, the feeling has quieted down here to an appreciable extent. The trips of the *Deutschland* helped too. But as long as it just remains nothing but a simple "armistice," and the sword of Damocles hangs over events in the shape of a recommencement of a ruthless U-boat war, positive and effective work is out of the question. Neither is anything of a financial nature to be expected on this side, since relations can become jeopardized overnight. If this danger did not exist, and, moreover, if it were not constantly harped on by Germany, and if unfortunate accidents such as the present case of the *Marina* were not always stirring up public opinion against us, the public, and official circles as well, would present a much more energetic front to the arbitrary acts of the British, which are making themselves felt more and more. Very many American politicians gifted with insight agree upon the point that if the U-boat question could once be allowed to rest in peace for a moderate length of time—not only from the point of view of actual performance by the avoidance of "mistakes," but also from that of public discussion—the Government would be forced to take steps against England.

For the present the Allies and their friends make use of the U-boat danger as a shield and a diversion. Of course, I can only judge the question of the recommencement of the unrestricted U-boat war from the point of view of this side. Above all, it is a purely military question. Are we—in spite of all counter-measures and quiet preparations on the part of the British—in a position to cut off England so completely from all imports that she will be obliged to conclude peace within a short time, that is, before America can come to her assistance with all its strength? Shall we, at the same time, be able to stop all imports by way of France and Calais? For, as long as one way remains open, England, supported by the certain prospect that America and the other Powers which have remained neutral up to the present time will come to her assistance, will continue to hold out. We can see in the example of Russia just what only one free mode of ingress means.

There is one point on which we must be absolutely clear. A withdrawal from, or even a material limitation of, the exercise of the so-

called concession which we made to the United States this spring in connection with the U-boat war, means war with the United States—and therewith probably also war with Holland and others, which otherwise would be starved out. This is the absolute conviction of all those here who have paid any attention to the question, and this includes those who were formerly inclined to a different view. No government and no party would venture, without committing political suicide, to give in to Germany on this question, which is one involving the lives of American citizens, after America has so definitely announced what it considers its international rights. The national feeling has risen to such a pitch during the war, and public opinion has become so hysterically sensitive as the result of the continually recurring incidents, exchanges of notes, and proddings by the press, that neither one of them will be able to bear any further burdens of this nature.

A revocation of our promises would be immediately followed by the diplomatic break. Our warnings would not be observed, and the death of an American as the result of a U-boat attack would result in a declaration of war. It is certain that the majority of the people in the country desire to see that peace maintained which gave an impulse to the country which it had never dreamed of, and they are grateful to Wilson because "he kept us out of war." But let the diplomatic breach occur, and the pressure will be too strong. Even the most zealous apostles of peace would not be able to endure the reproach that, by breaking off diplomatic relations, they had in a sense given Germany a license to kill all Americans in the future. Of course, our enemies, in order to add fuel to the flames, will exert all their influence—particularly upon the press, financial circles, and society. As a matter of fact, there is a very strong party in existence which regrets that America has not long since taken up the fight against us on the side of "civilization and freedom."

It is plainly observable from here how England seizes every opportunity to bring about, if possible, a break between the United States and Germany. It is publicly known that England attributes much less importance to the dangers of an unrestricted U-boat warfare than she does to the advantages of drawing America over to the side of the Allies. This should certainly give us something to think about. From this view-point it certainly looks as if by reverting to the unrestricted U-boat war, we were merely playing into our enemies' hands.

I repeat once more that these are all impressions gathered from the attitude on this side, and to that extent may certainly be one-sided.

One fact, however, remains my immutable conviction, and that is that the resumption of a ruthless U-boat war means war with the United States; and in the interests of the cause I can not urge upon you too seriously to submit this conviction over and over again to the proper authorities and have them recognize its true force, so that we shall indulge in no self-deceit or false hopes in this connection, *à la* England.

It is equally certain, according to my opinion, that such a war would immediately be carried on by setting in full motion America's endless resources in man-power, money, war industries, ships, etc. Nor are we to expect any effective opposition to be supplied by the German-

American element here. They would not be able, nor would they attempt, to bear the brunt of such a national tempest. The days of the *Lusitania* proved this to be the fact.

Finally, there is no necessity for me to point out the incalculable moral and economic disadvantages which would result from our going to war with the United States—and probably with additional neutral Powers—disadvantages whose effect would extend far beyond the duration of the war and which would add much to the difficulties of an economic reconstruction.

Then there is a document from present Under-Secretary of State Albert, a memorial directed to Secretary of State Helfferich, dated November 6, 1916, and handed over by him to the Foreign Office. The material passages from this document are as follows:

If, as a matter of fact, it were possible to force England to sue for peace as the result of an unrestricted conduct of the U-boat war, it is obvious that it would be unnecessary to pay any attention to the attitude of disapproval of the neutral Powers, and particularly the attitude of the United States of America. Whether Germany is strong enough to bring this about, I am not in a position to judge. All the probabilities are opposed to such a conclusion. In connection with this, it is pointed out here that up to this time we have not been able to cause serious interference to, or in any way to jeopardize, the transportation to France of English weapons, munitions of war, or troops. England has rendered the small stretch between Dover and Calais proof against submarines by a system of nets and patrol boats. If we were not successful in breaking through this defense, England would be able, even if we were successful in blockading the west coast, to transport all materials, foodstuffs and troops, etc., overseas circuitously by way of France, although to a certain extent with great discomfort and difficulty (transportation by train inside of France, transportation across the Channel). As a result, the question would be whether we had enough submarines and whether their various activities would be sufficiently vigorous to bring about an effective blockade of the English west coast and the northern and northwestern coasts of France. The blockade would have to be so effective as to actually prevent movement on the part of the transports, except in isolated cases, and, further, to result in a permanent blockade. For, if it were to be established for only a few months, the chance that the nations opposed to us would in the meantime be forced to give in would be very slender. According to sources of information of an absolutely reliable nature, England has for so long been preparing for the U-boat war, and has stocked herself to such an extent with foodstuffs and raw material, that even though the temporary cutting off of raw material, munitions, and foodstuffs would be discommoding, the effect of the U-boat war would not be felt until a very considerable time had passed. And in connection with all this, we must bear in mind that it is possible for all manner of unforeseen circumstances to occur in the course of a few months; that, in any event, the question of whether or not the United States would come into the war would be solved within this

period of time and that England, buoyed up by this hope, would do her best to hold out. I can not too earnestly call your attention to the fact that the ruggedness and stubbornness of the English national character is not to be looked upon as existing only in hackneyed speech; rather must it be admitted that there is no doubt that the English people, in spite of the occasional raising of certain voices for peace, has thoroughly recognized the seriousness of the situation and the significance of the arbitrament of war on the question of world power, involving thereby, in a certain sense, the very existence of England; that England is economically reorganized and rejuvenated, that she has brushed a number of earlier difficulties out of her way—I mention at present only the elimination of the restrictions of the labor unions—and that she has made up her mind definitely to hold out to the last. For this reason, there is absolutely nothing to be expected in the nature of a supposed moral effect or of a supposed overawing of England. Important as is the matter of bluff in politics, an element of which we Germans often make too little use in the commercial field, we must constantly keep before us the fact that in the case now under discussion the only justification for the resumption of unrestricted U-boat warfare would be the possibility of an actual isolation of England for a period of from at least four to six months.

Conceding the impossibility of effectively carrying out a thorough blockade, we are faced with the following considerations in connection with the results which would be brought about by the resumption of the U-boat war.

So far as the United States is concerned, I can unhesitatingly announce my opinion that the loss of American lives as the result of torpedoing a ship without previous warning and without provisions being made for the safety of the passengers, would mean war with the United States. The possibility of carrying out an unrestricted U-boat war for any length of time without the loss of American lives, can not be seriously contemplated, in view of the course matters have taken up to the present time.

There are isolated expressions of opinion to the effect that the American Government and, in any case, Wilson, if he remains at the helm, would shrink back from the final step of declaring war. In support of this view, they point to speeches of Wilson and also of Hughes, during the election campaign, in which both announced as one of their principal aims the keeping of the United States out of the war. I believe that this view is erroneous. It is perfectly true that the inclination of the great mass of the American people is to keep out of the war, to enjoy in peace the benefits of the unparalleled wave of prosperity, and not to bother about the war, or, in fact, about the question of foreign politics at all. This was shown in its time in the course of the well-known conflict between the President and Congress over the *Sussex* case. Such a mental attitude, however, would only be maintained in the absence of the loss of American lives on the occasion of such attacks, under circumstances which could not be justified according to the American view. In such a case as this, I very much doubt whether even a president whose inclinations are all against war, would be able to influence a public opinion which has

become unanimously opposed to the U-boat war and whose attitude is in the nature of a condemnation of the U-boat war. The slogan "Loss of American Lives" would, together with the influence of the press, which is active in the cause of the British, give rise to such a storm of sentimental excitement on the part of the almost hysterically inclined, sentimental American people, that the result would be a well-defined hostile attitude towards Germany.

I will pass over some matters which are of lesser importance. He then continues:

The results of a war between the United States and Germany are serious beyond expression. I used to be of the opinion that the United States was already accomplishing all it could in the way of helping the Allies out, that the cold-blooded business sense of the Americans would prevent them from providing the Allies, who were already in a weak financial position, with further large sums in case of a war, and that for this reason the entrance of the United States into the war would have no particular significance so far as Germany was concerned. As matters have developed, I must recede from this opinion.

As soon as it is determined to go to war with Germany, all differences of opinion will vanish in a moment. All parties will back up the President unanimously. The entire people would be carried along on a tidal wave of, I might almost say, hysterical patriotism. The German-Americans would be the first who would assure the government of their absolute loyalty.

It is perfectly true that a direct participation by the United States in military operations could hardly be expected. At the same time, the possibility of even this should not be underestimated. In case Japan were, in agreement with England, to give the required guarantees, we might well have to reckon upon the possibility of having a certain percentage of the fleet, and particularly of the torpedo-boat destroyers, etc., made available to the patrol service directed against submarines. What would be more important, is that a great number of volunteers would enlist in the armies of the Allies. The fact that this did not occur in the case of Mexico was due to the circumstance that the Mexican situation under the Wilsonian policy was completely topsy-turvy and that as a result there was no occasion for the patriotic spirit to burst into flame. In a war with Germany, the seriousness of which the nation would soon come to appreciate, we should, in my opinion, have to reckon upon a number of army corps consisting of American volunteers. It is asserted, even at this time, that there are about 28,000 Americans in the English and French armies. Since this information was announced by the *Times* and was not an item which could count in England's favor, it is probably right. The great number of American air pilots in the French service, which has led to the establishment of a special American flying corps, is well known. A material reinforcement of this important branch of the army would at once take place.

But it is not so much the military as the economic side of the question which would bring the ultimate decision. The American Government would perceive at the very start, particularly if the Republican Party,

whose abilities have been proven and whose experience in affairs of state are well known, were in power, that the main benefit of the American conduct of the war would not consist in the part they would play from a military standpoint, but in the energetic support they would give the Allies. The practical significance of this would be that the United States would take over the financing of the war. The government would call for great war loans, which would be met to overflowing as the result of patriotic inspiration, and it would thereby be placed in the position of putting still greater sums at the disposal of the Allies. How great these sums would be is beyond all calculation, on account of the enormous concentration of wealth during the last two years.

I shall again pass over some passages of lesser importance, to the following:

The indirect result of making all these resources available, moreover, would be an increase in war deliveries. There was a time when the American war deliveries were incapable of further increase, and even now we must naturally not overlook the fact that the shrinkage in tonnage resulting from the U-boat war involving torpedoing without warning would always constitute a very considerable obstacle. On the other hand, we should not forget that for a considerable period of time the American ship-yards have been crowded with orders and that right now the first deliveries are taking place which will naturally increase in volume. Then, too, the increased demand would, even in the face of an unprecedented rise in freight rates, necessitate the withdrawal of the last available ship from traffic with neutrals. Again, the tonnage of the transport ships of the American navy, of which it is possible to make good use, is not at all inconsiderable. The capacity of production on the part of the American industries is undoubtedly capable of being increased. I can no longer adhere to my former assumption that a declaration of war would lead to the stopping of shipments of ammunition to the Allies, or at least to a diminution thereof, because the American Government would need the munitions of war for its own army and navy. Indeed, if the American Government realizes that it is not a question of itself undertaking military operations, it will in its own interests endeavor to take a hand in the war in a most efficient way, which is by helping out the Allies, and for this reason it will not increase, or, in any event, will increase but little, the deliveries for its own army and navy, and concentrate its efforts on increasing the deliveries to the Allies.

Under the influence of appeals to patriotism, a number of factories which up to the present time have refrained, as a matter of principle or in their own interests, from deliveries of ammunition, etc.—I shall mention here only the monster plant of Ford—will be devoted unstintingly to this production.

I shall refrain from discussing the reaction which a war between Germany and the United States would have upon the neutral countries of Europe, i.e., the Scandinavian countries, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, and Greece. In my opinion, these countries would not be able to withstand the pressure already exerted upon them by our opponents if they were faced with the entrance of the United States into the war

and the indignation of public opinion in the countries in question on account of the U-boat war.

Particularly marked would be the psychological reaction upon Germany's enemies. If the stubbornness and endurance of the British constitute even now a material factor in the prolongation of the war, it is certainly not easy to see how England, France, and Russia too, could be dissuaded from continuing further with the war, from devoting their last efforts, and from making new and desperate endeavors, when they realized that the United States was behind them. The result would be that, even if we hold with unquenchable optimism to the idea of a final German victory, the end of the war would be postponed to some indeterminate time in the future.

Accordingly, I should look upon the resumption of an unrestricted U-boat war as a national misfortune which could in its last analysis lead to Germany's defeat.

The CHAIRMAN: I desire to bring to your attention the following memorandum inserted in the records:

Private letter, Haniel to Treutler of December 28, 1916, communicated to Lersner at the General Headquarters, with the request to bring it to the knowledge of General Ludendorff. Copy of Albert's memorial transmitted to General Ludendorff in accordance with marginal memorandum. However, transmission was not through the Foreign Office, but presumably through the Department of the Interior.

I shall then read to you the last clause of Question 2:

What were the reasons why the Supreme High Command of the Army did not recognize as sound the arguments submitted opposing the unrestricted U-boat war?

Question 3: What were the reasons why the Supreme High Command of the Army, as is shown from the telegram of General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg of December 23, 1916, to the Imperial Chancellor, assumed that Wilson's appeal for peace of December 21, 1916, was instigated by England and was not based upon Wilson's peace move which was first suggested by the Imperial Government?

Question 4: Were the individual stages of Wilson's move known to the Supreme High Command of the Army? In particular, were the reports sent in by Count Bernstorff, which covered the period from December 21 to January 9, known to the Supreme High Command of the Army on January 9, 1917, when the resolution was made to launch the unrestricted U-boat war?

Question 5: Did the Supreme High Command of the Army take the view that England could be forced to make peace by July 1, 1917, at the latest, as was made to appear in the memorial of the Admiralty Staff of December 22, 1916?

Question 6: General Ludendorff states in his book, on page 253, that on January 29, 1917, in the interview held at the Headquarters, no demands had been made by the government that the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat war be postponed, whereas Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg has stated in his testimony to the investigating committee that he did make such demand. How is this contradiction to be explained?

On this point, his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg has asked leave to speak.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe that this question is based upon a misunderstanding which prevails in connection with what I stated to the committee. I have before me the stenographic report of the hearing in question. At that time, I stated as follows:

Even before the 29th of January, Admiral v. Holtzendorff had repeatedly and unqualifiedly stated to me and to Secretaries of State Helfferich and Zimmermann, that the U-boat war could no longer be postponed, since the U-boats had left port and it was impossible to recall a good part of them. Admiral v. Holtzendorff repeated this statement to me on the 29th of January, and to Secretary of State Zimmermann as well, when we requested that the U-boat war be postponed, basing our request on Count Bernstorff's telegram.

From this statement, the fact reveals itself, and I again desire to assert its existence at this point, that on January 29, jointly with Secretary of State Zimmermann, I requested Admiral v. Holtzendorff to postpone the U-boat war in view of Count Bernstorff's telegram, and that, in response to this request, Admiral v. Holtzendorff declared to me that it could not be granted because the U-boats could no longer be called back. After receiving this unqualified and definite statement, I did not again take up the question of postponing the U-boat war on the occasion of the joint interview which the Supreme Command of the Army, the Admiralty Staff, and I had with His Majesty the Emperor, in view of the fact that, so far as I was concerned, the matter had been settled as the result of the categorical announcement made by Admiral v. Holtzendorff. Consequently, in my opinion, there is no contradiction between the statements made by General Ludendorff and my comment made to the committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that, after this explanation of his Excellency Bethmann, we can dispense with the answering of this question, for it would now be of no purpose to have it answered. The committee is of the same opinion.

I shall then ask General Ludendorff to continue.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: May I first answer Question 2?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: So far as the Supreme High Command of the Army was concerned, the statements of the Imperial Chancellor governed entirely. I do not recollect the memorials of the Under-Secretaries of State which were read here, in spite of the fact that they have been read here, and that the memorandum accompanying the records states that the reverse is the case. So far as I am concerned, I believe that this is the first time that I have heard them.

Witness LUDENDORFF: If it says there that I received them, I undoubtedly received them. There were, however, just as many memorials sent in which

spoke in favor of the U-boat war, and the General Field Marshal and I looked upon all these articles as the work of private parties and took the stand that we were to place ourselves entirely at the disposal of the statesman who was responsible in the premises. So far as we were concerned, that man was the Imperial Chancellor or the Secretary of State of the Foreign Office.

Witness V. HINDENBURG: And I may be allowed to add at this point that Count Bernstorff's statement has certainly made it clear that America was bound to enter the war against us even without the U-boat war.

The CHAIRMAN: Let me add on this point, that, to the extent that I have understood Count Bernstorff's remarks, that would have been the case only had we rejected mediation.

Witness V. HINDENBURG: We gave to the reasons assigned by the Imperial Chancellor against the unrestricted U-boat war the full weight to which they were entitled. The military reasons which have been, in part, already mentioned here, and which are, in part, to be given by General Ludendorff, were the sounder from our point of view. The resolution to launch the U-boat war was perhaps the most difficult decision which, up to that time, had been taken by us. The only resolve which presented still more difficult features was the one which was taken on the 28th of September, 1918.

The CHAIRMAN: May I ask General Ludendorff to answer Question 2.

Witness GENERAL LUDENDORFF: I intended to continue.

On December 15, on the western front, there had been a severe attack made by the enemy, which had again proved very costly to us in human lives, prisoners, and war material. Defeat pointed with warning finger to the critical nature of our situation. It showed us that our troops were exhausted. I immediately left Pless, where our General Headquarters were at that time, for the west, and held conferences there with the various leaders of high commands, and, moved by the considerations which had swayed both the General Field Marshal and myself ever since the close of August, and in accordance with the views which we had communicated to the Imperial Chancellor at the beginning of December, I sent this telegram:

Since Lloyd George has rejected our peace proposal by his announcement in the lower house, I am convinced, as the result of the impressions which I have gained at the western front, that from now on the U-boat war must be ruthlessly conducted.

We are not dealing here with a resolution formed during a moment of excitement, but one which had been fostered for a long time. In this connection, I call your attention to the deep impression which our defeat at Verdun made upon the entire people and, above all, upon the brave Army. It could not have understood how we could have refrained from making use of an instrumentality of warfare which would have kept it alive, would have lightened its burden, and would have brought about victory for the home-

land and the end of this frightful war. In this instance, too, what we had to do was a thing which had been incumbent upon us so often during this war, and that was to attempt to read the uncertainties of the future and to make a great resolve.

On the 9th of January, when His Majesty ordered the launching of the U-boat war, that is, ordered that on the 1st of February we would proceed free from those restrictions which had hampered us up to that time, we were convinced that the Entente would curtly reject Wilson's peace proposal. At that time, the Imperial Chancellor also looked upon this move as having definitively come to naught. We were forced to take up the U-boat war as a logical military measure and not as a special experiment—

(Agreement on the part of Witness General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg.) —the General Field Marshal and I refuse to apply this expression in this connection—but as an instrumentality of warfare which held out material prospects of success—a method which was finally adopted after lengthy deliberation and after a trying inward struggle.

The question has now been put to us concerning Count v. Bernstorff's telegrams; I believe it was Question 3. I could now take up the answering of that question.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: "To be delivered personally. Only for the Imperial Chancellor and the Secretary of State." Telegram of Secretary of Legation Lersner to the Foreign Office, December 23, 1916.

General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg wires as follows:

In connection with the exchange of telegrams of General Ludendorff with Secretary of State Zimmermann with regard to the U-boat war, I herewith inform your Excellency that my opinion is that, in view of the military situation, we should lose no time in putting into effect the policy agreed upon of torpedoing armed enemy merchant ships. The Entente is proceeding with the war with all the means at its disposal. There is no doubt of this, in view of the fact that we have been so roughly repulsed by every parliament. Even Wilson's efforts can accomplish nothing unless our opponents are willing to give themselves the lie. I believe that Wilson's proposal was evoked by England. In my opinion we are not able, for national reasons and in view of our strong military position, to go into the question at present. It would, therefore, be a dangerous omission, one not to be justified from a military standpoint, if we were to allow ourselves to be held off in any way. The Army confronting the enemy would feel this in the same way. Officers and soldiers expect the ruthless application of all arms. . . .

Witness LUDENDORFF: I should like to state that, in the original which has been placed at my disposal, one phrase is lacking. I believe that you read the words: "I believe that Wilson's proposal was evoked by England."

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Yes.

Witness LUDENDORFF: And then comes a period. Now the original shows—and I must assume that this is the document which Mr. v. Lersner received: “I believe that Wilson’s proposal was evoked by England in order to put us off.”

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Pardon me, strange to say those words are lacking here.

Witness LUDENDORFF: I can only state the fact, and it is in these words, “in order to hold us off,” that our explanation is to be found for believing that it was suggested by England.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall find out whether, by chance, this intermediate phrase is to be found in the original in the Foreign Office.

Witness LUDENDORFF: My personal view is that, in this case, it would not be so very important.

The CHAIRMAN: I have just been informed that the telegram came in to the Foreign Office, as a matter of fact, in the terms in which it has just been read to us by Dr. Schücking.

Witness LUDENDORFF: Anyway, it is not of vital importance. I simply wanted to call attention to it because it is on this point that the reply is based which the General Field Marshal has drafted with regard to Question 3.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: As a matter of fact, that merely confirms what has already been said here. The telegram of December 23, 1916, plainly shows that we believe that Wilson’s proposal was evoked by England for the purpose of holding us off, and that means for the purpose of blocking the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war which was giving England great anxiety. The attitude of the American Government gave us the general impression that America and the Entente were secretly working hand in hand.

The CHAIRMAN: That is, merely a general impression.

Witness LUDENDORFF: Question 4 could be answered at the same time.

The CHAIRMAN: In this connection, I should first like to have read some of the correspondence of General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and former Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg regarding Professor Schulze-Gaevernitz’s paper of 1918, addressed to Prince Max v. Baden.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Letter of General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg to Prince Max v. Baden, of October 10, 1918.

On January 9, 1917, the decisive conference was held at Castle Pless, at which Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg first of all described the effect which the unrestricted U-boat war might have upon the neutral States, and in so doing stated that:

The determination to launch the unrestricted U-boat war depends then upon the results which we may expect,

And

But if the military authorities consider the U-boat war essential, I am not in the position to contradict them,

And

Of course, if success beckons, we must follow.

That the unrestricted U-boat war would result in thwarting any peace mediation undertaken by President Wilson was not suggested by any word spoken by the Imperial Chancellor. And it is equally true that, in the course of the conferences which were held by the Foreign Office and the Supreme High Command of the Army concerning the U-boat war, no mention was ever made of any diplomatic move in the United States in favor of peace. The only question which was invariably taken up in the course of these conferences was whether and when the time would come for the U-boat war to be commenced, reference being had to the military situation.

I was informed of a peace move on the part of President Wilson as the result of the following documents:

1. Copy of a telegram of the Imperial Chancellor of September 23, 1916, in which it was suggested to His Majesty the Emperor that Ambassador Count Bernstorff should be instructed to suggest to President Wilson to make a peace proposal to the Powers as soon as possible, and in any case before he was reelected.

No such peace proposal followed.

2. A letter of the Imperial Chancellor of the 27th of November, 1916, containing the information that an agreement had been reached with the associated Powers in favor of the peace proposal of the Central Powers. The Imperial Chancellor, in this connection, stated as follows:

President Wilson has informed Count Bernstorff confidentially that it is his intention to put forth an appeal for peace in the time elapsing between now and the New Year. Whether he will really carry out his purpose remains wholly uncertain; he is undecided and fearful of a set-back. We must reckon on this, that he will only issue his appeal if he no longer feels certain that the Entente will meet it with a curt rejection.

On December 12, the peace proposal of the Central Powers was made.

3. Telegram of the Foreign Office of December 24, 1916, containing the text of a reply to a note of Wilson's, touching the principles involved in the restoration of a permanent peace. The telegram commenced with the following words:

In order to prevent any meddling on the part of President Wilson in peace negotiations, we have decided to answer his note in such a way as to reflect the spirit of our peace move, but to make it perfectly clear that it is our desire to deal directly with our enemies.

With the above, the Imperial Government refuses to accept Wilson as a mediator.

4. The Instructions of the Imperial Government transmitted to Ambassador Count Bernstorff about the 7th of January, 1917. They begin with these words:

Intervention on the part of the United States in actual peace negotiations as such is positively not desired by us on account of the state of our public opinion. . . . Your Excellency will deal in a dilatory manner with the question of the disclosure of our peace conditions. On the other hand, I authorize you, even at this time, to put us on record as being willing to cooperate in that part of the program for which the President entertains a special interest (arbitral settlement of disputes; peace league).

So that here, too, the Imperial Government considered the mediation of no importance.

5. A telegram of Ambassador Count Bernstorff of January 10, 1917, which was communicated from the Foreign Office on January 14 and 15, 1917, in which the Ambassador calls attention to the fact that the memorial concerning armed merchant ships "will bring to naught peace mediation of Wilson" and considers "a break with the United States absolutely unavoidable if action is taken along the lines set out in this memorial."

In the meantime, the order for the unrestricted U-boat war was obtained by the Imperial Chancellor from the Emperor on the 9th of January, 1917, and on the 16th of January, 1917, instructions to that effect were communicated to Ambassador Count Bernstorff. The Imperial Government declared:

We have determined to take this risk (of a break and possibly of war with the United States).

6. A telegram communicated by the Foreign Office on the 22d of January, 1917, coming from Ambassador Count Bernstorff on January 16 [19?], 1917, in which it is stated:

If military reasons are not absolutely imperative, a postponement (of the unrestricted U-boat war) would be urgently desirable. Wilson believes he will be able to obtain peace on the basis of the principle announced by us, of equal rights to all nations.

The Secretary of State for the Foreign Office added that he had recommended to the Chief of the Admiralty Staff to adopt certain propositions submitted by the Ambassador, dealing with days of grace, in order to avoid the danger of the break with the United States.

The time would have been too late for postponing the carrying into effect of the orders for the launching of the U-boat war, since the U-boats had, in part at least, left port.

Today, as then, I am convinced, as the result of my recollection, as well as from the records themselves, that the Imperial Government attached no further importance to any peace mediation by Wilson which it had originally suggested, but which Wilson for a period of months had delayed in carrying out.

I sum the matter up as follows:

1. The charge of having forced the Imperial Chancellor into carrying on a policy of duplicity with regard to the United States has absolutely no application to myself and to General Ludendorff.

2. Objections to the effect that the diplomatic move of President Wilson might be interfered with by the U-boat war were never men-

tioned in the course of the proceedings held concerning the resolution leading to the U-boat war, either by the Imperial Chancellor or by the Foreign Office.

(Signed) V. HINDENBURG.

The CHAIRMAN (to Witness Dr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg): Does your Excellency desire to have the answer thereto read at the same time?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should like to leave that to be determined by the committee itself, whether the committee believes that it can shed additional light upon the situation. I believe that in my reply letter to Prince Max v. Baden, I endeavored to adduce the proof that the Supreme High Command of the Army had been kept informed with regard to the essential facts. I believe that in one respect this matter has been further made clear in the course of the former proceedings of this committee. With full intent, and also with this particular point in mind, I explained the distinction, in the course of my first remarks, between an actual peace mediation, in the ordinary sense of the word, and a peace move. As a matter of fact, I was questioned about this by the committee still further thereafter, and I believe that we have reached an understanding with regard to the matter. At that time, I announced that distinction in explicit terms, so that the conclusion would not be drawn from the statements contained in the records, which were to the effect that a peace mediation by Wilson was not desired by us, that a peace move, in the sense indicated by me, was not desired by us. The subject was, of course, fully discussed by us from every point of view, to the effect that an interference by Wilson in the actual peace conditions, which I also set out in detail, was not desired by us.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee considers it important, nevertheless, to have this document read.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: The answer of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to the Imperial Chancellor Prince Max v. Baden:

Hohenfinow, October 23, 1918. Let me express my sincere thanks to your Highness for having kindly communicated to me the letter of Field Marshal v. Hindenburg of the 16th instant, and to do myself the honor of making the following observations in reply.

Shortly after Field Marshal v. Hindenburg was called to his present duties, a general conference concerning the unrestricted U-boat war took place in Pless. I stated that my position was this, that the question of whether it should or should not be launched could only be discussed if the military authorities believed that we could offer successful opposition not only to the United States, which most certainly would enter the war, but to the neutral Powers of Europe, which, too, were becoming restless. The military authorities declared that they would take up the matter again for final decision as soon as the conditions above set out came into being—a situation which at that time was non-existent.

It was in this sense that I addressed the main committee of the

Reichstag when, in September, 1916, it again took up the U-boat question for detailed consideration. The Center Party expressly announced at that time that it would support the unrestricted U-boat war as soon as requested to do so by Field Marshal v. Hindenburg. This being the case, a decisive and compact majority of the Reichstag, extending from the Right over into the ranks of the Progressive Party, was in favor of the U-boat war; for, as is well known, the Conservatives and the National Liberals had been for some time its arduous supporters. As a matter of fact, the political parties placed the decision in the hands of the military authorities; as a matter of form, they kept the responsibility with the political branch as had heretofore been the case.

After the defeat of Roumania and the rejection of our peace proposal of the 12th of December, 1916, the Supreme High Command of the Army announced not only that the unrestricted U-boat war could thereupon be launched, but that it must be launched. It was stated that, on land alone, the war could not be fought out to a successful termination and that, on the other hand, we were confronted with the danger of being forced to succumb in course of time. That even as matters stood at the moment, the situation was full of menace; that we could no longer continue to meet our obligations to the hard-pressed troops on the Somme if the British troop and munition transports were allowed to cross the Channel undisturbed; that the Navy was stating without qualification that England could be forced to the point of peace before the new harvest, and that, even though success was not absolutely assured, we were left with no other choice.

In the conference held with His Majesty the Emperor on January 9, 1917, I stated that, so far as the results of the U-boat war prophesied by the Admiralty Staff were concerned, they were just as incapable of being made a matter of proof as the reverse of the case; that in spite of the abundance of figures which had been submitted, its actual results were no more than a matter of estimate to which no definite limits could be set, and that the weight attributed to its moral effect amounted to no more than the result of personal opinions; that if the U-boat war failed, we would be exposed to complete defeat. For it was certain that the United States would enter the war, and it was also certain that in such case the only ending of the war to which we could look forward would be one brought about by force of arms alone; that the Entente made it perfectly clear that it desired to have nothing to do with peace negotiations, by the manner in which it had rejected our peace proposal of December 12; that under these conditions and in view of the war situation as it had been described by those military authorities who had been called to the council, I could not afford to counsel His Majesty to reach a decision opposed to the votes of those who commanded the Army and the Navy.

Field Marshal v. Hindenburg stated in the course of the remarks which he submitted in favor of the U-boat war, that he estimated the help which America would give in the war as being but insignificant, and certainly not such as to turn the scale, and announced, moreover, that any peace mediation which President Wilson might bring about would not be fruitful in results favorable to Germany.

His Majesty the Emperor reached the conclusion which is well known, of giving his unqualified support to the vote of the Field Marshal and of Admiral v. Holtzendorff.

The following factors call for consideration in attempting to form a picture of the general situation:

In the spring of 1916, it was still possible to withstand the storm of sentiment in behalf of launching the unrestricted U-boat war. It was a matter of public knowledge that the number of U-boats was insufficient and that General v. Falkenhayn's opinion, which was likewise in favor of the war, was not of decisive weight. But in January, 1917, the contention that such a war would bring results was supported by the circumstance that the U-boats had very materially increased in numbers, as well as by the prospect of the poor world harvest and the menace of Roumania which had been definitely set at rest. If, under those conditions, Field Marshal v. Hindenburg were to demand it as a necessary instrumentality of warfare, backing this demand with all the authority of his personality, the die would be cast. The tremendous influence of the Field Marshal was not based alone upon those exploits in the performance of which he had repeatedly rescued us from the effects of a war situation which had been considered hopeless, but also upon those elements which stood back of him. These were our elements of defense, taken as a whole, and, fundamentally speaking, all of those elements of the political parties which, in view of the unhappy tendencies of our political conditions at the time, liked to consider themselves the sole representatives of patriotic feeling. They all trusted in Field Marshal v. Hindenburg with the same enthusiasm as was manifested in their distrust of the political branch, and for months had loudly clamored for the U-boat war. On the other hand, in the opinion of the most ardent supporters of the U-boat war, the most important of those who opposed that war, the Social Democrats, were tinged, in spite of the 4th of August, with the disrepute of unpatriotic feeling, and the pacifists who had followed the lead of the Social Democrats in the question of the U-boat shared the reputation of the latter. And finally, that group of individuals, probably made up of men from all parties, which was not to be estimated as small in numbers and whose influence upon their fellow-citizens must be recognized as having been considerable, who, as a matter of quiet and independent judgment, considered that the plan of the unrestricted U-boat war should be rejected, hardly ever became a public factor. The censorship, which lay in the hands of the military branch, gave the opponents of the U-boat war no chance, whereas its adherents were given a free hand, with the exception of an occasional brief interruption.

There could be no doubt as to which was bound to be the winning party under these conditions. Even if I had spoken against it, the U-boat war would have been decided upon on the 9th of January, 1917, and my doing so would merely have resulted in a change of Chancellors, a condition which, even at that time, was hoped for by Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and which he strove to bring about.

The only factor which at that time might possibly have blocked the U-boat war, to wit, the chance of ending the war in some other way, was, as I have already pointed out, not in existence. In view of the

reasons which were given in favor of the U-boat war, and the manner in which it was demanded, it would have been necessary that such chance be one which could be represented as constituting at once a practical certainty and as being imminent. Vague and unsubstantial hopes that later possibilities might come into being, were altogether without effect, since the U-boat war was stated to be an absolute military necessity in view of the war situation, and since to commence it later than the 1st of February would have been equivalent to a refusal to launch any effective U-boat war, in view of the important importations of foodstuffs which were scheduled for the month of February.

Under these circumstances the argument of a Russian revolution, in spite of the frequency with which the occurrence had been prophesied, could not be made use of. Our peace proposal had just been rejected so unqualifiedly and with such scorn that the making up for lost ground in this regard in the near future, could not be considered. There remained the possibility of the American peace mediation.

With regard to the steps which we took in respect to President Wilson, I beg leave to refer to the records of the Foreign Office. It will not be possible for me to piece together in faultless sequence individual occurrences from my personal recollection, upon which I am bound to rely entirely for the purposes of this letter. I may supplement the records by calling attention to the fact that, during the latter part of the winter of 1916, I endeavored to suggest the thought to President Wilson's confidential man, Colonel House, on the occasion of a talk at the American Embassy in Berlin, that President Wilson, in the capacity of the man who brought peace to the world, could win undying fame, and that His Majesty the Emperor had expressed the same thought, although in a different way, in my presence, to Ambassador Gerard in the spring of 1916.

As the records show, it was expected that President Wilson's mediation would take the form of bringing our enemies to the council table by means of an appeal for peace, and that he himself would only take part in negotiations to the extent that general questions, such as the league of nations, arbitral tribunals, disarmament, and the freedom of the seas, were concerned.

It is not known whether Wilson ever actually attempted to persuade the Entente to take up peace negotiations. It is true enough that he spoke of doing so and mentioned the fact that he wanted to do so, but, so far as I know, he never carried out this intention. According to his own statements, no possibility of a successful move was discerned by him up to November, 1916. Above all, he considered it essential to wait until he was reelected as President and until the effects of the repeated U-boat incidents and the deportations of the Belgian workmen, as manifested by the outraged feeling in his country, had died down. And in the meantime, even after his election, which was brought about on the basis of a peace platform, and which, consequently, assured him that he would receive the support of his country in any peace move that he might make, he allowed nearly two months to slip by wasted. His inaction is probably less to be accounted for on the ground of a supposed lack of capacity to reach quick decisions—

for we have bounteous proofs to the contrary—than it is to be attributed to the fact that he never made up his mind as to whether, after all, he should mediate in favor of peace.

In any event, he certainly had no such desire during the first phases of the war. True though it may be that the American deliveries of ammunition, without which the determination of the Entente to carry on the war would never have been so long maintained, were not in conflict with international law, it is equally true that the determination to put a quick end to this murdering of humanity would have found ways and means to stop it. But an Anglo-Saxon community of instincts and interests, and a prejudice against the Germans, increased by the British campaign of calumny and not qualified by any knowledge of his own regarding conditions as they existed in Europe, and also, to be sure, supported by many and various mistakes made by us, constituted factors which undoubtedly had a very strong effect on Wilson's policy. The intrinsic difference in the mode of address which characterized the notes sent to us by the President and those which were sent by him to the Entente—the fact that he absolutely failed to meet what, after all, could be expected of him as the result of the *Sussex* note, to wit, that he would take steps against the arbitrary methods of the British at sea, adopted in defiance of international law, are features which throw a clear light on the situation.

In Entente circles, Wilson's attitude was characterized quite differently. Such a thoughtful man as Lord Grey, who is free from the spirit of braggadocio and bluff, although he is a partisan in the case, expresses himself in these characteristic terms in his work on the League of Nations: "President Wilson and his country have enjoyed the great advantage, for more than two and a half years, of not only watching the war in the capacity of neutrals, but of being able to consider its problems and reach decisions. One of the decisions was this, that they were bound to enter the war against Germany if the world, of which they formed so substantial a part, was to be saved from what they regarded as a catastrophe."

The future only will be able to reveal Wilson's real features behind the veil. But the fact that we could not pierce the veil was bound to be rich in consequences. We were not able, even if we did not allow our perception to be troubled by the outcry raised by the Pan-Germans, to reach the point of feeling a real confidence in the seriousness of his purpose and in the integrity of his intentions to bring about peace, nor did we see any reason to believe in an inclination of the Entente to meet any peace appeal by Wilson.

It is easy to understand how the President shrank back in apprehension when faced with the chance of taking any step that might be devoid of results; his pride and his prestige could brook no refusal. But how could he expect that the Entente, inspired as it was by the most savage hate and by a wild lust of conquest, could lend an ear to his call for peace when he himself constantly maintained a curt attitude toward us, and, in contrast therewith, stood helpfully at the Entente's side encouraging it with friendly words and millions of shells? We find our answer time and again in the speeches of the Entente statesmen, based on the knock-out policy of Lloyd George; in the scornful rejection of our peace proposal of the 12th of December; in the Entente's reply

to Wilson's own peace note of the 21st of December, 1916. The self-reliance of the enemy—speaking in this way—their confidence in their overwhelming superiority in man-power and war material, in the fact that we were cut off, as well as the fact of the lack of resistance on the part of our allies, were no idle phrases, unfortunately, but simple cold conclusions based on things as they were and as they existed in the eyes of the Entente, and probably in the eyes of President Wilson also. The way in which our military leaders justified the unrestricted U-boat war shows that they, too, took these factors into consideration.

We can only state as the result, and we must assert most emphatically, that no firm reliance could be placed on the fact that Wilson would actually make a move in the nature of mediation, and also that the war spirit of the Entente, so sharply expressed in the reply sent to our peace proposal, which so emphatically and relentlessly rejected the idea of all negotiations, made it absolutely impossible for us to bank upon the circumstance that they would be willing to negotiate within an appreciable time.

There was all the less reason to suppose that, after this curt repulse, the President would shortly come forward with some new move, because Ambassador Gerard, at the commencement of January, 1917, and acting for his government, denied the authenticity of the statements made in American papers which told of an intention on the part of Wilson to send a second peace note to the Powers.

I have attempted to portray the situation as it then existed, with broad strokes of the pen. According to what I have stated, it is bound to be clear, and why, that on the 9th of January, I was not able to hold out any prospect of a peace move on the part of President Wilson such as might lead to success, either at the moment or within an appreciable period of time. And because I was not able to do that, I of course refrained at that time from making any detailed comments about a possible peace move on Wilson's part. But I certainly—and I repeat this with emphasis—stated at that time, in emphatic and clear-cut phrase, that the inevitable entrance of the United States into the war would put an end to any possibility of the war being ended in any other way than by the arbitrament of the sword and that, consequently, if the U-boat war should fail, our doom would be sealed.

In view of Wilson's attitude, which I have described, as well as that of the Entente, I was just as unable later to offer any guarantee of any kind that the intention of President Wilson contained in the telegram of Count Bernstorff of January 27, 1917, to bring about a confidential mediation in the interest of peace, could lead to a favorable result. And furthermore the Navy stated, in the course of the conferences held at the General Headquarters on January 29, that the U-boats had already left port with their new orders. It was stated that, in the absence of any assured telegraphic correspondence with the boats, a revocation of the orders which would involve giving up the intensive U-boat warfare would be absolutely out of the question. Count Bernstorff was informed of these statements, but he was instructed at the same time to let the President know that we would stop the intensive U-boat war as soon as assurances should be given that his efforts to obtain a peace which was acceptable for us would lead to that end.

It now remains for me to answer those remarks by the Field Marshal, summed up at the conclusion of his letter in the following sentence: "That the charge of having forced me into carrying on a policy of duplicity with regard to the United States has absolutely no application to himself and to General Ludendorff."

At the outset, let me state that, up to this time, I have known nothing of such a charge. At any rate, I have not been able to find it in the article by Professor v. Schulze-Gaevernitz, on which the Field Marshal bases his letter. It is true, however, that, not in the article written by Schulze-Gaevernitz, but in Georg Bernhard's article which was based thereon, namely, "Bethmann und Wilson" in the *Vossische Zeitung*, morning edition of October 9, I was charged with playing a game of duplicity, so far as America was concerned. Since the Field Marshal accepts this term in this sense, I shall have to go into the matter.

I was convinced from the beginning of the war that we would not be successful in obtaining a satisfactory peace by force of arms alone, and by this I mean the opportunity of definitely asserting ourselves in opposition to the overwhelming power of our enemies. Of course, I had spoken of a stronger Germany in the course of my Reichstag speeches. But was there a single German who did not hope for such a strengthening? How little the annexation fever appealed to me is well known to all the world, and is proved by the hatred with which its disciples pursued me. And furthermore, the announcement of a program of renunciation to which, even until shortly before the close of my incumbency, a policy of mere self-assertion would have been considered tantamount, would have simply resulted in sweeping me away. It was not in the carrying on of a policy doomed from the outset to turn out a fiasco, that I considered my task to consist, but in this, to lead the people back to their senses, little by little, from the megalomania which began to manifest itself shortly after the war began and which was constantly being fanned into flame by powerful sources of influence and was in utter contradiction to the situation—and to do this without imperiling the nation's power of resistance. And at the same time, I followed up possibilities of a peace of understanding along every line which offered.

Then follows a passage with regard to neutral powers, which I shall omit out of consideration for foreign countries.

The peace moves which connected up with President Wilson lay straight in the path of this policy, which was carried out consistently by me. Just as was the case with the other steps, these moves, too, had to be kept entirely secret from the public, not only on account of the feeling against the United States which was constantly being enthusiastically inflamed in this country by all those who supported the U-boat war—I call your attention to the action of Delegate v. Heidebrand in the Prussian House of Delegates, which was favorably passed by the majority, and to the very strong words which were spoken by various parties in the Reichstag—but also out of consideration for foreign countries. As I believe I am right in recollecting, according to a telegram of Count Bernstorff, President Wilson himself

expressly recommended that all our steps which had been taken in connection with himself be kept absolutely secret, as, otherwise, it would be futile from the outset to hope for any success. The fact is that the publication of all diplomatic exchanges, which is now being so eagerly sought on all hands, must have its limits. And above all, the view expressed by the writer of the article in the *Vossische Zeitung*, that the publication of the steps that I took with President Wilson would have put an end to the anti-American agitation and to the feeling which existed amongst us, is too ridiculous to merit consideration.

Those in command of the Army, as is made plain by the Field Marshal's letter, were wholly acquainted with the situation. They knew—since I have no records before me, I can not vouch for details—at the very latest, by my telegram of September 23, 1916, to which the Field Marshal refers, that it was my desire to have President Wilson issue an appeal for peace. They knew from my letter of November 27, 1916, at the very latest, that, according to Count Bernstorff's communication, the President was planning to issue a call for peace. And finally, they knew from the negotiations concerning our peace proposal of the 12th of December, 1916, which went back to the first days of November, that it was my earnest desire to bring about a peace of understanding, based upon equal rights to all.

Now the Supreme High Command of the Army draws from individual phrases taken from the telegram of the Foreign Office of December 24, 1916, as well as from the instructions to Count Bernstorff of January 7, 1917, the conclusion that the diplomatic branch had no faith in a mediation by the President and that, as a fact, it was rejecting Wilson as a mediator. The conclusion is erroneous and is easily refuted by the records, which are not available to me at the present time. In this connection, I will simply state that we naturally preferred to have the Entente meet us in our peace proposal rather than secure mediation by Wilson, and that the instructions to Count Bernstorff merely repeated the instructions already referred to and the contents of which had never been objected to by the President, which assumed that Wilson's participation in the peace negotiations would only include general questions without in any way revoking our wish that the President bring the Entente to the conference table.

The statements of the Field Marshal might be interpreted to mean that he would have taken a different stand with regard to the U-boat war if he had received more exact information with regard to my desire for Wilson to issue a call for peace. If such a supposition were to be expressed, it would not be tenable.

The intensity of my desire was a matter of complete indifference, so far as the decision concerning the U-boat war was concerned. The only point which could count was whether I could oppose those reasons in favor of the U-boat war which were characterized as compelling from the military standpoint, with a well-founded prospect of peace negotiations in the near future. That I was not in a position to do this, and why this was so, I have already shown. But beyond this, the assumption which I am attacking here stands in sharp contrast to the actual attitude of the High Command of the Army itself toward any steps taken in the direction of peace on the part of the Americans.

The statement made by the Field Marshal at the time of the conference with the Emperor on January 9, 1917, and which I have cited, was but a weak echo of the view which he had already communicated to me. I remember with great distinctness that, at the close of December, 1916, I received two telegrams from the Field Marshal, which declared that every attempt to meet Wilson's peace suggestions of the 22d of December, as well as any move postponing the U-boat war, which was a necessary and correct step from the military standpoint, would, for national and military reasons, be absolutely out of the question, and, while emphasizing the fact that the war spirit of the Entente was unbroken, attributed the peace suggestions to English machinations. Both these dispatches will probably be found in the Foreign Office or in the Imperial Chancery, and their wording will confirm my recollection. No stronger proof can possibly be conceived that the military leaders had made up their minds to cling to their idea of the U-boat war under any and all circumstances, even if there had been ground for believing that a successful mediation in the interests of peace through America was imminent.

To revert to the subject of the supposed duplicity of my policy, I would doubtless have answered every charge if I had resigned as soon as I recognized that the U-boat war was inevitable. But as a matter of fact, no element of the situation would have been altered thereby; rather would the U-boat war have been all the more definitely decided upon and conducted. The energy with which the Army Command was able inevitably to carry out its will by the application of the most extreme measures, leaves absolutely no doubt on this point. The suggestion, however, which is now made from another side, that my resignation would have stopped the war with the United States, or at least have softened President Wilson's heart so far as we were concerned, is politically so utterly devoid of sense as to call for no argument whatsoever.

The fact that my retirement would have had no effect upon the actual developments of things, made the decision to remain, which was a very difficult one for me, much easier. And in this, another factor played a part.

Quite aside from the fact that His Majesty the Emperor had, on the 9th of January, made up his own mind in favor of the U-boat war, in view of the actual situation, in view of the powerful influences of governmental authorities, and in view of the honest belief entertained by the great part of the people that the result which the U-boat war was to bring was a guarantee of victory, he would not have been able to ignore the desire of the Supreme High Command of the Army. It was for this reason that I was unable to recommend to His Majesty to oppose the views of his military advisers. This is not the place in which to discuss the general reasons, outside and beyond the field of the U-boat question, which induced me at that time to remain at my post. I was, however, in part influenced by the consideration that I would not have been acting fairly if I counseled His Majesty as I thought I was called upon to do, and, in the same breath, have asked to be excused from the game by the acceptance of my resignation. And again, and from a third angle, I was affected by the perhaps not alto-

gether immaterial thought that I would weaken the moral effect of the U-boat war upon which the Navy depended, if, by my resignation, I put on record my lack of confidence in this instrumentality of warfare.

If I had urged on a peace mediation by Wilson and, at the same time, had encouraged the U-boat war, that would have constituted duplicity toward the United States. In view of what I have said, that was not the case. The U-boat war, which long since had been urged and pushed forward by influential elements among the people, was decided upon at a time when, in view of the rejection of our peace proposal, I could no longer depend upon the successful initiation of any peace moves, so far as our opponents were concerned—and this resolve was reached by virtue of the paramount authority of the Supreme High Command of the Army, and because the step was designated by it as a war method which was absolutely essential.

(Signed) v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the General Field Marshal perhaps like to have us call a recess now? Or shall General Ludendorff make his reply? We shall be having a recess in any case.

Witness LUDENDORFF: I should like to say a few words with regard to the article of Mr. Schulze-Gaevernitz in order not to have impressions created for which there is no justification. The article of Mr. Schulze-Gaevernitz, so far as I have any recollection of it, and everything which is now being discussed—these things were no more than incidents so far as we were concerned. Our business was to conduct the war, and all our thoughts and actions were directed toward the conduct of war. If at the present time I have no recollection of every individual incident, that is the explanation for it. Mr. v. Schulze-Gaevernitz's article was of importance to us simply because it carried the inference that we had practised duplicity. That is one of the most infamous lies ever told.

The CHAIRMAN: I must beg of you not to use such expressions, not to announce such personal judgments. Mr. v. Schulze-Gaevernitz was a member of the Reichstag and is a member of the National Assembly, and it is my duty to protect him against such things as this. And moreover, he never made this statement.

Witness LUDENDORFF: I wanted to say: The lies are those which are current among the people to the effect that we are to blame for all the evils which have befallen them. And it is for this reason that this article of Mr. v. Schulze-Gaevernitz and the statements of Mr. Bernhard—to neither of whom I naturally referred—make it a matter of the greatest interest for us to avail ourselves of the opportunity given us here of emphasizing the fact that the General Field Marshal and I have been absolutely loyal. It is for this reason that this article obtained its significance in our minds. I believe that the charge of having forced the Imperial Chancellor to play a double game in his policy with the United States is absolutely inapplicable to the General Field Marshal and myself. The statements

made by the Imperial Chancellor make it wholly beyond question that we acted loyally, because we were convinced that Wilson's peace move—as the Imperial Chancellor has here stated—had certainly come to an end by January 9th. I do not know what words the Imperial Chancellor used, but the sense of his words was that our peace proposal had been unqualifiedly rejected and that, up to the 9th of January, he had not been impressed with the fact that anything new had turned up.

The CHAIRMAN: May I inject a remark at this point? In the letter of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg, he states in so many words: "At the outset, let me state that, up to this time, I have known nothing of such a charge. At any rate, I have not been able to find it in the article of Professor v. Schulze-Gaevernitz, on which the Field Marshal bases his letter."

As a matter of fact, this charge is not contained therein.

Witness LUDENDORFF: So far as we were concerned, that was not the principal point either. But the impression had been spread abroad among a great portion of the German people that we had played a double game. For that reason, it was necessary for us to show beyond a doubt that we had played no such double game. That alone was the reason for all this interchange of correspondence. And I believe that I can establish the fact here, that the assertion that we had played a double game was definitely laid at rest by the statements made by the Imperial Chancellor. Furthermore, no objection was ever voiced by the Imperial Chancellor on the occasion of the conferences concerning the U-boat war, to the effect that the diplomatic move by the President would be interfered with by the U-boat war. This suggestion was merely due to the fact that the public had the idea that the Imperial Chancellor had held out the prospect of peace on the 9th of January and that we had been opposed to this peace move. It is for this reason alone that we have made these assertions. I have desired to state this in order to show here, too, and to this great audience that no doubt whatsoever exists concerning the loyal attitude of the Supreme High Command of the Army toward the Government and toward the German people.

So far as the question of the War Press Bureau is concerned, I had originally intended not to go into the matter. But I should like to do this now, and I should like to go as far as to communicate to you the first announcement which the General Field Marshal and I issued to the War Press Bureau; for this will not increase the length of the hearing. This occurred on the occasion of the retirement of General v. Falkenhayn from the Supreme High Command of the Army. In the course of this announcement, we stated:

Under the guidance of England, our opponents have brought their political and military policies to such a pitch of unanimity that it became necessary for us, too, to make certain that those in authority

should cooperate with an absence of all friction. Differences of opinion and personal differences which interfered not only with matters of military leadership, but with the harmonious relations of those responsible for the conduct of the war and for the policy of the country had to be eliminated, just as was the case with machinations carried on at home for the purpose of shaking the confidence of the people. The only way of bringing this about was by the appointment of General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg.

Then on the 27th of December, 1916, we issued the following promulgation in connection with the censorship. Gentlemen, I must ask you to be good enough to check me by the records, for it is impossible for me to store all of these things in my memory. In this censorship document, we said:

Both the enemy and the enemy press are well aware of the powerful instrumentalities of war which are at our disposal for the purpose of continuing the conflict. It follows that, for our press to call particular attention to these things would be superfluous and would only afford a reason for the enemy to declare that our peace proposal was made in bad faith and that its only purpose was the justification of the launching of the intensive U-boat war. The next task which confronts the press is to insist upon the acceptance of the peace proposal. In case this does not occur, this policy will constitute, at one and the same time, the best method of preparation, so far as our own people are concerned, in case the war is to be continued, and the best preparation so far as the neutrals are concerned.

Gentlemen, in this connection I must read still another document, a document which was written, in fact, on December 17, 1917, in which it was stated:

On November 17, 1916, I had called your Excellency's attention to the fact that the instructions given to the censorship authorities with regard to handling the situation which had been created by the Polish manifesto, were not, in my opinion, taken seriously enough. In view of the fact that, at the present time, and on the occasion of the peace proposal of the 12th of December, those military authorities which have to do with the press have once again failed to receive information sufficient in point of substance or in point of time, I can not refrain from suggesting the following for your Excellency's consideration: The significance of the press in war times, and in ever-increasing measure in the present and in the coming stages of the war, is one which is appreciated on all hands. Authorities of the government and state authorities maintain relations with the German press and provide it with data based on their own personal standpoints. And the German press has given evidence of a full understanding of these questions. The propaganda department, which had been established in connection with the Foreign Office by your Excellency, does still greater justice to the importance of the foreign press. But this increasing activity on the part of the individual authorities in the field of the press brings with it the danger of the deconcentration of effort and of working merely along parallel lines, particularly in view of the fact that, in

some instances, individual news bureaus have but a scant personnel and that, as the result of the increasing burdens imposed, each finds time only to look after the interests of its own particular bureau—

That was the result of working together like colleagues!

What is lacking is a single leadership for the handling of this instrument of the political and military branches, which is constantly increasing in scope and importance. The general press conferences in the Reichstag, on the occasion of which the representatives of the individual departments make their statements to the press, can not be looked upon as an example of single leadership in the matter. For here, too, the individual departments operate independently of each other and without having reached any mutual understanding beforehand. The number of offices which operate in conjunction with the press has become increased by the bureaus which have come into existence during the war. Thus it comes about that, while all these bureaus are, of course, operating conscientiously, they are not working together from a single point of view. To bring about cooperative effort of this kind in the field of the German and the foreign press seems to me to be of the very greatest significance. Our policy would, moreover, be very materially strengthened, so far as our allies were concerned, if these press matters were conducted under uniform and well-defined rules and regulations.

For this reason, I suggest to your Excellency that you be good enough to take steps pointing toward the establishment of a central office for this purpose, as soon as possible. In this connection, pains must be taken to avoid the mere addition of a further press bureau on top of those which already exist, which would have the result of increasing the present abundance; the question is much rather that of establishing something new, a central office, which shall have charge of the individual press bureaus and which shall receive suggestions from the latter, shall bring them to the point of working in harmony, shall see to it that all existing bureaus operate in unison, and shall be particularly responsible for the issuance of far-seeing instructions, sent out at the right time, when events of greater importance are occurring, and that the measures taken are agreed upon beforehand. In view of the tasks which this new central office will be called upon to perform, it should be kept in direct touch with your Excellency. And I should consider that its establishment at the Imperial Chancelry would be expedient, since the information division of the Foreign Office has, first of all, to take up only such matters as are of peculiar interest to that department. In case your Excellency thinks that it would be well to call upon the bureaus interested for a conference—and I include among these the representatives of the Bundesrat—I would request that you be good enough to call upon the Supreme High Command of the Army also. Your Excellency may count upon me to give every assistance that I can in the way of carrying out this proposal to increase unity of action on the part of the government.

LUDENDORFF.

General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg sent another letter to the political branch, to the same effect, at the beginning of January. I wanted to

emphasize this in order to establish the fact that the Supreme High Command of the Army took great pains to work in absolute harmony with the political branch, and I desired to emphasize this circumstance by means of this letter.

Concerning the reply to the fourth question, which still remains to be answered and which I may, perhaps, be allowed to take up—

The CHAIRMAN: May I venture to inject a question at this point. On October 23 of this year, when former Ambassador Count Bernstorff was asked by this committee about the conversation which he had with your Excellency on May 4, 1917, after he returned, he expressed himself on the point. The particular passage in question reads as follows:

And the conversation which took place was more or less to the effect that General Ludendorff received me with these words: "Well, you wanted to make peace in America, did you? You probably thought that we were at the end of our rope?" Whereupon, I answered him: "No, I did not believe that we were at the end of our rope, but I did want to make peace before we reached that point." Whereupon, General Ludendorff answered me: "Yes, but we did not want to, and moreover, we are going to end the business now by the U-boat war inside of three months."

Witness LUDENDORFF: I do not understand how Count Bernstorff could say a thing of this kind. Count Bernstorff, however, over and above this, has already stated—I can only base what I have to say on this point on the words used in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*—that he received the impression that his activities were not in accordance with my wishes and that I was opposed to them. I can not give you my views concerning the impressions which Count Bernstorff received. Impressions are too much a matter of the presence or absence of temperament. And I admit with the greatest satisfaction that Count Bernstorff and I have very different natures. Nor were my impressions of this interview agreeable impressions. I do not make this statement by way of a come-back, but in order to make it plain that Count Bernstorff and I represented two utterly different points of view, of such a nature as to make a mutual understanding a very difficult matter; and that was bound to manifest itself in the course of the brief interview, during which it was impossible that these differences could be overcome.

Now if Count Bernstorff says that his activities were not in accordance with my wishes, this simply means that his impression was a false one; for I assumed that he was simply carrying out the instructions of the Imperial Chancellor, and we ourselves had pursued no other path than the latter assigned us. If Count Bernstorff says that I was personally opposed to his activities, then he is exactly right. I considered that it might have been possible that he had not given the Imperial Chancellor correct information with regard to Wilson, and it was in this way that I explained to myself our

vacillation in the conduct of the U-boat war, which was bound to deprive us of the respect of the United States and of neutral Powers, and to lead inevitably to war. I had also heard opinions expressed which were very unfavorable so far as Bernstorff's activities were concerned. Moreover, I consider him responsible for having done absolutely nothing to oppose the British propaganda. I can ascribe it to naught else but the British propaganda that the American soldier looked upon the war against Germany as if it had actually been a crusade. I also heard that the Consul General in New York did not share the views of Count Bernstorff. And I also recollect a long report—but I do not know at this moment who the author of it was—which commented upon the failure of the German policy in the United States. I can only repeat that these were mere incidents so far as we were concerned; we had other things to do. So far as I was concerned, gentlemen, these were nothing but purely personal matters. So far as I was concerned with the foreign policy, nothing existed beyond the Imperial Chancellor and the Foreign Office. For that reason, I can not substantiate the different individual points which came to my attention.

Now, gentlemen, I am in the fortunate position of being able to prove my views. Yesterday, Count Bernstorff made a statement to the investigating committee after Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg had finished with his remarks, which, in my opinion, is of conclusive significance. He told us that we would have been successful in stopping America from coming into the war only if we had accepted his mediation. I do not know whether Count Bernstorff reported these statements which he made here, officially to the Imperial Chancellor in due course. In any event, I never heard anything about this view of Count Bernstorff's. And then Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg states in the course of his remarks—I have these remarks before me, as reproduced by Reimar Hobbing, and so I assume that they are official:

Count Bernstorff made the tremendously important statement at this point, that President Wilson had informed him through Colonel House, directly after our *Sussex* note, that he could do nothing against the measures which England was taking at sea and which were in violation of international law, because the public opinion of this country would not permit any interference on account of the interweaving of American business interests with those of the Entente.

Gentlemen, I was astounded when I read that Count Bernstorff had made this important announcement here for the first time.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: No!

Witness LUDENDORFF: But that is in the report of the statement made by the former Imperial Chancellor. Gentlemen, the report states that Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg said that Count Bernstorff had given out this tremendously important information here.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: No, that is not correct!

The CHAIRMAN: You can not always depend upon newspaper reports.

Witness LUDENDORFF: But those are the official reports upon which I am bound to depend.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: That is what Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg said.

Witness LUDENDORFF: I can simply state what I saw in the newspapers, and I can merely say here that, accordingly, I must be bound to consider myself as fully justified in asserting that I was, personally, entirely opposed to the activities of the Ambassador. I shall come to other matters later.

The CHAIRMAN: In a minute, your Excellency. At this juncture, I venture to interrupt once more. In my opinion, the next question which you have to answer is to what extent this statement of Count Bernstorff—

Witness LUDENDORFF: I am coming to it.

The CHAIRMAN: If so, please proceed.

Witness LUDENDORFF: Gentlemen, I did not speak of this matter in this way, and I request that the testimony of the General Field Marshal be taken, and that the testimony of all those who worked with me be taken for the purpose of ascertaining whether I ever said that we desired no peace for the German people. That is the gravest charge that I have ever known. So I request the Chairman to be good enough to have all those who worked together with me called. I will not sit still under the imputation of having said this thing. That amounts to scoffing at the responsibility which we felt deep in our hearts. Gentlemen, that responsibility was so heavy—I can not express to you how heavy it was. The newspapers scoffingly count ninety-four photographs of me, and they throw it up to me that there was no picture in which I smiled. I will tell you why I lost the habit of smiling; the anxiety for the country, the worry about our Army, the worry about our future, and the gigantic burdens imposed, perhaps resulted in chilling my capacity to smile. The charge which is made against me here is so grave a charge, and in the face of the whole German people I demand that the matter be cleared up by taking the testimony of all those who cooperated with me.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: May I be allowed to speak?

The CHAIRMAN: At this moment, I desire, myself, to make a statement. General Ludendorff has said: "I do not understand how Count Bernstorff could say a thing of this kind." I should like, first of all, to call attention to the fact that all statements that are made here are made under oath, and that we assume without qualification that these statements have been based on the best knowledge and belief of the speaker.

In the second place, General Ludendorff has charged Count Bernstorff with being responsible for having opposed in no way the British propaganda while over there. These matters have already been closely gone into by the committee, and it has been explained how extraordinarily difficult it

was to oppose the British propaganda in more effective manner than was done.

His Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg is entitled to speak at this point.

Witness LUDENDORFF: But I have not yet finished.

The CHAIRMAN: I know, but his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg is entitled to speak first.

Witness v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I simply wanted to announce that what General Ludendorff read as a passage from my statements here, and which was taken from the pamphlet which was published by Hobbing, is in entire accordance with the stenographic report. Count Bernstorff made the statement here that President Wilson had informed him through Colonel House, directly after the *Sussex* note, that, on account of the business considerations of his country, he could do nothing against England, and I thereupon said, in the course of one of my statements: "Count Bernstorff has given us the tremendously important information here that Wilson informed him of this fact." I believe that that is absolutely in accordance with the facts.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But first, let us verify this matter by reference to the record.

The CHAIRMAN: If you please.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The point is to determine whether Count Bernstorff had reported from Washington to Berlin the information which he gave us here. And he did give information concerning it. It would be best for me to read the passage and to show that, as a matter of fact, Count Bernstorff sent in an official report to the effect of the statement which he has made here. To this extent, then, the matter was not a new one so far as the records were concerned. It may be well for me, I say, to read the passage which confirms the truth of what I have just stated: Mr. v. Jagow asked Count v. Bernstorff how Wilson's inaction was to be explained, how it was that he did nothing so far as England was concerned, and, in answer thereto, Ambassador Count Bernstorff replies on July 13, 1916—it is to be found in the records on page 20 of the collection of documents issued to all you gentlemen, entitled "Diplomatic Correspondence between Berlin and Washington"—in the following terms:

The inaction of Mr. Wilson, who only entertains the one thought of being reelected, is to be explained at the outset by the fact that no pressure to proceed against England has been brought to bear upon him by public opinion on this side. As is well known, the situation which could serve as a background for such action is lacking here. Those American circles which are suffering financially from the English blockade are entirely lost sight of in the face of the monstrous stream of gold which our enemies, without being skimpy as to details, or without shying at the question of graft, have poured out over this country. For the rest, Wilson's general ideas with regard to taking

any step in connection with England are about the same as those expressed by your Excellency. The fact is that he does not believe that he would have any success whatsoever, because he has no means of exerting pressure. If he threatened England with war, nobody would believe him. The situation is quite different with regard to the well-known desire of the President to bring peace to Europe. On this point, he has at this time practically the whole of American public opinion at his back.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: May I have leave to speak?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, General.

Witness v. HINDENBURG: I simply desired to state that I, too, am indignant at what has been attributed here to my faithful helper and counselor. He always took the stand in behalf of peace, but certainly only for an honorable peace, and at that time we hoped that we would be able to win an honorable peace by a German victory. It was with this end in view that we worked day and night. I do not know whether you gentlemen have ever felt such a responsibility for the Fatherland as we were bound to bear, deep down in our hearts, for years.

I protest most sharply, and with indignation, against the remarks which have been directed against General Ludendorff.

I thank you.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I beg to state that the passage which the recorder has just read from Count Bernstorff's reports of the 13th of July, 1916, has certainly a meaning entirely different from that of the announcement made to us here by Count v. Bernstorff. For here the express statement was made that Wilson had informed Count Bernstorff by Colonel House, that is, out and out officially, that, on account of the business interests of his country, he could do nothing against England, whereas the report which the recording secretary has just read says nothing about any official information being given Count Bernstorff, but merely records the general impressions which Count Bernstorff received concerning the conditions in the country.

The CHAIRMAN: General Ludendorff—or did you desire to speak, Count Bernstorff?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: I have neither the wish nor the inclination to answer in the same tone which has been adopted by General Ludendorff with regard to myself. I simply want to clear up a misunderstanding. If General Ludendorff thinks that I said that he did not desire peace in any case, then I must state that this never even occurred to me. What I meant to say was that the thought that General Ludendorff intended to express was that he did not desire any mediation by Wilson in the interests of peace. I never stated anything else, nor did I ever intend to say anything else.

Witness LUDENDORFF: Nor was it thus that matters occurred. The Imperial Chancellor was absolutely final, so far as we were concerned, and,

so far as we were concerned, Count Bernstorff was at that time merely a private person, an Ambassador who could have no more to do with the fate of the country. And if I showed an increase of feeling, I believe, Count, that such is the fact. My honor has been touched and my feeling of responsibility has been wounded. That was the bitterness which my words conveyed.

The CHAIRMAN: I can not admit that Count v. Bernstorff has touched your Excellency's honor by these remarks. (Commotion.)

Count Bernstorff repeated this remark (Continued commotion)—I request absolute silence—Count Bernstorff repeated this remark under oath as representing the impression which he received from the conversation which he had with you. He has expressly explained that this remark was made for the purpose of showing that you did not desire to have any American mediation. That was the impression which he received. That certainly does not exclude the idea that your purpose was to have the war end by means of negotiations and not as the result of a victory, which, after all, was a perfectly justifiable desire.

Witness LUDENDORFF: I can simply state in reply that I alone am responsible for my honor.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, but I also, sitting here as Chairman, am responsible for seeing to it that, naturally, the honor of some other person is not attacked, and if the charge is made here that an attack on a man's honor has been made, then it is incumbent upon me, as the Chairman, to defend myself against the parallel charge made against the manner in which I conduct these hearings.

Witness LUDENDORFF: Gentlemen, I have already requested that witnesses be summoned, and I should like to submit as witnesses General v. Bartenwerffer—these are the gentlemen who always worked together with me—Colonel v. Haeften, Colonel Heye, Lieutenant Colonel Wetzell, perhaps Colonel Bauer, and Lieutenant Colonel Nicolai. I believe that these gentlemen will testify as to how I felt concerning peace.

The CHAIRMAN: In this connection, I may call attention to the fact that we intend to take the testimony of a great many of these gentlemen later, with regard to the press question. In the short period which remains at our disposal, it will not be possible for us to take the testimony of these gentlemen now.

Witness LUDENDORFF: I regret this extremely, because the impression might remain that what I have said is not correct.

Gentlemen, what was the real aspect of the situation at that time? It was quite different when Count Bernstorff visited me. At that time, we gave proof of the fact that we wanted peace and, indeed, I call your attention to the fact that at that time the revolution broke out in Russia, and I beg to remind you that we fought a battle at the Stochod and that the success on

the Stochod was amazingly great. And I will call the Imperial Chancellor's attention to the fact that he sent Mr. v. Grüнау to me at that time, requesting the Supreme High Command of the Army to take as little advantage as possible of this great success in order not to disturb the peace with Russia. Now, gentlemen, that was a great hardship so far as the troops were concerned; but we determined to comply with the request in order to meet the wish of the Imperial Chancellor concerning peace with Russia. I will recall to your minds the storm—well, perhaps "storm" is too extreme a term—but the attitude of the press with regard to this action. And I will also call to your attention that it was exactly in those days that the Imperial Chancellor had expressed the hope that we would not, so to speak, irritate the Russians by attacking them. Now, gentlemen, we undertook to agree to this plan too, and said to the Supreme High Command in the East: "Hold up your attacks"—for no other purpose than to support the policy of the Imperial Chancellor, whose object was to bring about peace.

Then it was, gentlemen—the beginning of May—that I drew up the conditions of the armistice with Russia—the conditions of the Russian armistice so mild that no pacifist could have taken exception to a single item. Gentlemen (striking the table), those are proofs that mean something. The words—but we will speak of that later!

Gentlemen, I have not yet finished. I regret that I shall have to take up matters still further which have to do with Count v. Bernstorff personally. But it has occurred to me that the Count knew every word that I spoke. This was flattering, so far as I was concerned; he certainly must have thought that I was a great man. But it further came to my mind that there were certain other remarks for which he did not assume the same certitude of responsibility. In this connection, I can only depend upon what is stated in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. According to the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Delegate Dr. Petersen stated: "So that you made no suggestions which were not followed up?" This referred to suggestions by which war might be avoided after the 1st of February. Count Bernstorff replies to this: "I can not remember exactly what was said at that time; but in any case, I do not recollect that I made any suggestion."

Then again Count Bernstorff characterizes the visit to the Field Marshal and myself, in spite of the specific question put by Delegate Dr. Cohn, and speaking under oath, as a pure act of courtesy which automatically occurred in connection with his presence at the Headquarters. Gentlemen, the conference at the commencement of May between Count Bernstorff, the Field Marshal, and myself, was no purely casual conference, but, as I am bound to assume, one which was intentionally brought about by Count Bernstorff. After his arrival in Berlin, he met my former aide, General Hoffmann. The latter wrote me that Count Bernstorff wanted to see me and speak to me, in order to give me his view with regard to the policy

which we should have carried on in Washington. That is more or less the way that General Hoffmann's letter reads. At the close of April, Lieutenant Colonel v. Haeften telephoned to General v. Bartenwerffer to the effect that Count Bernstorff desired to have a talk with me. That is about what happened. I said: Not until after a few days; for at that moment it was impossible to receive him. For you see, at that time we were at war! At that time, the great Champagne battle was raging and made the tremendous responsibility which rested upon us doubly plain to us. It was at that time, I believe on the 3d of May, that Count Bernstorff came. After his return, he spoke to Professor Baron v. Bissing to the same effect as he had to General Hoffmann, that is, telling him that he wanted to see me. Now, gentlemen, I make that suggestion, and I leave it to the Chairman to call these witnesses.

I have nothing further than this to say against Count Bernstorff.

The CHAIRMAN: Count Bernstorff, would you like to be given a chance to answer this?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I certainly remember that at that time I dined with General Hoffmann here in Berlin, and that the question came up whether I was not going to the Headquarters shortly. It is very probable that I stated at that time that I would like to talk with General Ludendorff, and that was certainly essential after my return from America. I assume that the same conversation took place with Lieutenant Colonel v. Haeften—I believe that Dr. Heckscher asked us both to dinner on one occasion. As you gentlemen know, two months went by before I came to Headquarters. It is also very likely that I said that I regretted the fact that I had not had an earlier opportunity of giving General Ludendorff information with regard to the United States. I probably said that. I assume that to be the case.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe so too. It was certainly a most reasonable wish that when our former Ambassador returned from the United States, he might desire to confer with the Supreme High Command of the Army.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: But I can no longer swear what I said to the gentlemen. The circumstance that I made special note of what General Ludendorff said to me at that time is one of obvious explanation, and, arguing from effect to cause, in view of the statements which General Ludendorff has made today, it is still more obvious. I had noticed at that time that, in any case, from certain quarters—I will not go so far as to say from any particular quarter—but that, in any event, on the part of certain Germans and of certain political parties, the intention existed to make me the scapegoat for the way that matters had developed in the United States. I knew that for a fact, and it was for that reason that at that time I paid particular attention to what every person in authority in Germany said to me.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now hear Consul Müller on the point of whether

the dispatches of December 28 and January 4—dispatches which were sent by Count Bernstorff—were communicated to the representative of the Foreign Office, v. Grünau.

Consul MÜLLER: I have gone into the records on this point, and it has been shown that all important dispatches containing the continued exchange of communications with Count Bernstorff during its critical periods were communicated to Mr. v. Grünau who was the representative of the Foreign Office in the General Headquarters. I have made up the list here. I do not know whether it is essential to go into the individual statements of the press on this point.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that this will suffice. Or do you attribute any particular significance thereto?

Witness LUDENDORFF: So far as we were concerned, the dispatches were of absolutely no value whatsoever, because it was the attitude of the Imperial Chancellor alone which was authoritative. Moreover, the answer to No. 4 is given here.¹

The CHAIRMAN: I move that we adjourn the session. Will it suit the convenience of the General Field Marshal for us to reopen the session, perhaps, at 4:30, or would you like to have a later date set?

Witness v. HINDENBURG: Could we not come Thursday?

The CHAIRMAN: No, unfortunately, that is impossible.

Witness LUDENDORFF: That is too much! One gets wrought up. Gentlemen, you should take this matter into consideration too. With me, it is a matter of nerves. The best thing that I can suggest is to have it Thursday if you want to hear anything further from me.

The CHAIRMAN: Since it is positively impossible so far as Thursday is concerned—since other hearings have been set and since the National Assembly again meets in full session—would it not be possible for the General Field Marshal to testify again today?

Witness v. HINDENBURG: No.

The CHAIRMAN: In such case, it would always be possible for us to take General Ludendorff's testimony alone.

¹ NOTE: The answer to No. 4 was not read. At the request of Witness General of Infantry Ludendorff, it was printed later, to wit:

We are not in a position to give you more detailed information from memory; we ask that the military records be examined. We believe, however, that in the letter of October 16, 1918, to the Imperial Chancellor, with regard to the Schulze-Gaevernitz publication in the *Vossische Zeitung*, all the material has been utilized. So far as we are concerned, the Bernstorff material could not be binding, as we were bound only by the views of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann as they are made clear by his testimony. He states, in the course of his remarks, that he looked upon the rejection of our peace proposal as an unqualified rejection, and that, up to the 9th of January, 1917, no element had been introduced which had strengthened the prospect of coming nearer to an agreement with the enemy by means of political measures. This view, which was established here as a fact, was one which was taken by the Imperial Chancellor on January 9, 1917. We were of the opinion that our proposal and the proposal of Wilson had come to nothing. We call particular attention to the fact that we now believe that we have been informed with respect to all important stages of the Wilson move.

Witness LUDENDORFF: I am not fit to do so, I am too wrought up.

The CHAIRMAN: Then we must postpone the matter, and I will set a new date for a hearing as soon as possible. It will not be possible to meet on Thursday. (Interruption: Tomorrow!)

It would be possible to do so tomorrow. Then we would set the hearing for 10 o'clock tomorrow. (Calls from the audience: Fast day!)

Well, yes, it is a fast day. But really, as things are, it would nevertheless be possible to set the hearing then. (Contradictions.)

We shall have a short conference on the point as to whether we will hold a hearing tomorrow.

The committee withdraws in a conference at 2:10 o'clock.

The committee opens the session at 2:16 o'clock.

The CHAIRMAN: In view of the fact that, on account of the witnesses being worn out, it is not possible to have a further session today, and since it will not be possible to hold a hearing tomorrow on account of the religious objections on the part of some, and on account of the further fact that it will be impossible to hold any further hearings on Thursday, the committee has decided to adjourn for the present, *sine die*. The date of the next hearing will be announced.

I close the session.

The session was closed at 2:17 o'clock.

FIFTEENTH SESSION¹

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 1920

The session was opened at 9:20 o'clock by the Chairman, Delegate Gothein:

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I open the session.

If a very long interruption has taken place in the course of our hearings, the reasons therefor are the following: We had become convinced—both in the Second Subcommittee and in the plenary committee—that it was not expedient to proceed with the hearings before the records pertinent thereto had been published. For since the records had not been brought to the knowledge of the press, as was to a great extent the fact, even in the case of the persons whose testimony was taken, the result was that superfluous and many-sided analyses took place, statements in the nature of pleadings, and the whole proceedings took on, to a certain extent, the aspect of a political debating society.

The purpose of the committee is to establish facts and to provide points of contact, but not to listen to far-reaching political analyses.

It has, unfortunately, not been possible for us to prepare a complete file of the various records having a bearing upon Wilson's peace mediation and the facts which operated to interrupt it, at as early a date as would have been desirable. The necessity arose of publishing an English edition of these records at least simultaneously with the German edition. And of course it was desirable to get out the French translation at the earliest possible moment. It had turned out that, in the absence of an English translation in English newspapers, individual records or reports of individual proceedings had been published in distorted form, the result of which was to present the activities of the committee, and, above all, the facts themselves, in a wrong light. It was for this reason that we felt ourselves bound to put off holding our sessions for such a length of time.

And even at present, we shall find ourselves in the position to go ahead only to a very limited extent, because the elections are upon us and it is no longer possible for us to take up further investigations on a large scale; and the printed matter is as yet uncompleted and will not be published for the next few days. But, nevertheless, we have considered it necessary, after the sudden breaking off of the former hearings, to give former Amba-

¹ Correction to be made in the Report in the Fifth Session of the Second Subcommittee of November 4, 1919: On page 236, seven lines from the bottom [this print, p. 422], the text should read: "Should acquire Longwy," instead of "should not acquire Longwy."

sador Count v. Bernstorff an opportunity to reply to the various attacks and statements which have been made, and particularly those coming from General Ludendorff. We took it for granted at that time that the hearings would be continued on the same afternoon. However, it became apparent that this was impracticable. We have seen fit to leave it to General Ludendorff's discretion as to whether he will appear at these hearings.

I will now ask his Excellency Count v. Bernstorff to tell us what he has to state in reply to the comments made in the last sessions of the investigating committee of the Second Subcommittee.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yesterday evening, a number of questions were submitted to me with the request that I reply thereto. Is it the desire of the Chairman that I answer these questions in the order in which they are put?

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, we leave it absolutely with you as to whether you desire to make other statements at the start. We would then want to come back to these questions, provided that they had not been answered by other information which you may give us.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I do not really care to make any general answer to the statements made by General Ludendorff, because, in my opinion, it is purely a matter of personal opinion as to whether Wilson's peace move would have brought results or whether the U-boat war interrupted the course of this move. No conclusive decision can be rendered on this point, because, naturally, after the events which had passed, we would be dealing with a hypothetical situation. I am still today of the opinion that, if Wilson had mediated in favor of peace, peace would have resulted. If General Ludendorff takes the opposite view, of course I can not make my assertion a matter of absolute proof at this time.

The first of the questions which have been submitted to me reads as follows:

In making your statement "that there was just one single possibility of keeping the United States out of the war, and that was for us to accept mediation in the interests of peace at the hand of the United States,"¹ did you mean that the United States would have entered the war against us for no other reason than that mediation by it was rejected by us, and without the resumption of the unrestricted U-boat war?²

I did not mean that. For I am still of the opinion that, without the U-boat war, we would not have become involved in war with the United States. In making this statement, I referred mainly to the conditions in Germany. In Germany the U-boat war was demanded with more and more insistence, whereas the American Government clung with similar pertinacity to its plan of initiating a peace mediation. I had always been

¹ Page 678 (this print, p. 808).

² Page 682 (this print, p. 812).

instructed from Berlin—and my instructions were in numerous ways emphasized by oral instructions transmitted by people who were able to reach the United States in some way or other—that if peace were not brought about, the U-boat war would be inevitable. Consequently, in my opinion, there was no other possibility of avoiding war with the United States than to accept mediation in the interests of peace by Wilson. For if this mediation was not accepted, the U-boat war was bound to come, and the U-boat war automatically involved war with the United States. Consequently, I believe that the following is an absolutely clear and logical political conclusion: That there existed absolutely no other means of avoiding war with the United States than the acceptance of mediation by Wilson. For if we did not accept it, then the U-boat war would be launched in Germany; or even if it was again postponed, it was certain that another attempt would be made by the United States to mediate; for, during the entire two and a half years of the war, the United States again and again expressed the desire to end the war by American mediation.

The CHAIRMAN: Let me inject a question at this point. Does your Excellency understand by the term “mediation by the United States” merely the act of bringing the belligerent parties to the conference table, or do you understand it to mean straight mediation? that is, that Wilson or, in other words, the American people should participate as a mediator at the peace negotiations? As you know, this question played a fairly important part in earlier hearings.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The original purpose of the President simply consisted in this, to wit, to bring the war-making Powers to the conference table. Whether, in the course of these negotiations, a more far-reaching method of mediation would have been introduced, is naturally difficult to state at this time. In the last phase of the negotiations, particularly around New Year's, the wish on the part of the United States to bring about a meeting for the purposes of conference, by means of confidential preliminary negotiations, became apparent because the view prevailed in the United States that, in the absence of such confidential preliminary negotiations, the Entente would refuse unconditionally to meet us at the peace-table unless we committed ourselves beforehand by binding promises; and it was for the very reason that, under no conditions, were we willing to make binding promises of any kind, that the American Government suggested this method of confidential negotiations. It is probable that they would have led to results more far-reaching than merely to summon the belligerents together for the purposes of conference. But that would have been an element of the negotiations concerning the effect of which it would be very difficult at this time to make any statement.

Delegate WARMUTH: Your Excellency stated that, in your opinion, America would not have entered the war had it not been for the U-boat

war. That is really in conflict with the statements which Wilson made in the Senate after the war was ended, the purport of which was, generally speaking, this, that America would have gone to war with Germany in any event. Was it, perhaps, the fact that there were elements of a different kind which governed, and which would have set the United States at war with Germany, and which Wilson, in your opinion, overestimated, or which, in any event, he estimated in such a way as to mean that for him, under any and all conditions, and even without the U-boat war, they would have been sufficient to have brought about a war with Germany? or, in your opinion, were these factors—of course, I do not know just what they may have been; it is exactly on this point that I should like to have your Excellency inform us—not sufficiently powerful to have been bound to bring about war under any and all conditions?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can simply repeat that I am personally convinced that if there had been no U-boat war, we would not have had a war with the United States, and that all other factors which came under consideration were merely used as propaganda, but would not have been of themselves sufficient to bring about the war; and I may well be permitted to say that I take a different view with regard to this statement made by President Wilson after the war: "I do think that we would have gotten into the war, even if Germany had committed no act of war against the United States." The fact is, however, that he added the following qualifying remark: "As things developed." Now, I interpret this phrase: "As things developed," as being applicable to the rejection of the American peace mediation. After Germany rejected the peace move which, in his opinion, would have led to a peace without victory, he believed that Germany intended to bring about a decisive victory by means of the U-boat war. And this was what he wanted to prevent. I have always said this: that it was Wilson's intention to prevent a real German victory; I have never denied that. I have never stated that Wilson was in favor of what we have called a German peace, but I have always taken the stand that, at that time, he did not desire any such peace for the Entente. Later, when the United States entered the war, an entirely different situation was presented. But at that time the United States desired a peace without victory. Later—to borrow Wilson's phrase "as things developed"—he got the idea that we did not desire anything but a German victory, and it was against this that he took his stand.

The CHAIRMAN: Does no one of the members desire to put a question at this point? None of the experts? Then I shall ask you to proceed with your answer to the second question.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The second question reads: Do you believe that the conclusion is correct, that if we had accepted mediation by Wilson, this would have made him our representative into whose hands we would have delivered ourselves?

I would say that the term "representative" is too far-reaching. I have always entertained the opinion that Wilson, as a man, occupies a position of altogether too great importance in the entire question of the peace mediation. In my opinion, it was not the President himself who was of such importance, but the fact that, in the elections of November, 1916, the majority of the American people had announced themselves to be on the side of a peaceful policy. It was on the authority of this mandate that the President advanced to the question of mediating in the interests of peace, and, to a certain extent, he must have been bound, as the result of the election, to stand for a peace without victory had it not been for this formal declaration of war by Germany in the form of the U-boat war—for that was what it was considered to be in the United States.

I have nothing further to say on this point.

The CHAIRMAN: Then we can probably take up the third question.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The third question reads: Did Wilson's demand for "a free outlet to the sea" refer exclusively to that territory which was later designated as the Polish corridor?

On this point, I can definitely state that that was not the case. I have a distinct recollection of a conversation with Colonel House. I can not be absolutely certain as to details, because I speak from recollection. I believe, however, that it was in the conversation which I had immediately following the message of the 22d of January. On this occasion Colonel House said to me: "We inserted this feature of free passage to the sea in order that it might be made possible for Austria-Hungary, too, to accept the standpoint of Wilson's message; for if Austria is shut off from the Adriatic, it can not survive; so we must make such a peace as will reserve an Adriatic port for Austria."

That is all that I have to say on this point.

The CHAIRMAN: Far back, on the occasion of one of the earliest sessions, it was asserted that this "free access to the sea" was not to be unqualifiedly understood as a territorial acquisition, but that the phrase involved the consideration of treaties covering the utilization of certain roads of commerce under guarantees which would safeguard the absolute freedom of trade routes to these ports. I believe that at that time no human being in the United States considered it possible that we would have to cede West Prussia, and that at that time, particularly, the idea of the corridor was only conceived in connection with agreements arrived at between the States.

Delegate WARMUTH: But I believe that I am right in recollecting that this message of Wilson of January, 1917, is, as far as it has to do with Poland, such as to make it clearly open to no other possible interpretation than that the question of German territory was involved in connection with the corridor to the sea, and that this territory was considered in the light of an

advantage to Poland. Perhaps it would be possible to put our fingers on this passage by referring to the records—for the moment, I do not recollect the passage with complete exactness; for what has just been said to us by his Excellency at this time is so absolutely new and so opposed to the understanding that all of us undoubtedly had at that time, that it seems to me to be very necessary to have the matter explained. As I say, I have not the records before me. Nor did I have the material at home. But it seems to me to be by all means necessary to have this phase clearly explained.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: And there is still another question to be considered. If House stated that Austria must be guaranteed a free outlet to the Adriatic sea, that assumes as a condition precedent that Austria is going to be conquered; that Austria is going to be destroyed; and that the dominion not only over Trieste, but over the Slavs who inhabit the country back of Trieste is going to be taken from Austria's hands. At that time, when the conversation took place, in the course of the year 1916, that would have been a peace which would have been unacceptable to the Central Powers. So that House had in mind these conditions, to wit, that already at that time the thought was that a peace would have to be a peace of conquest; that the rule of Austria over its different nationalities would have to be removed, just as Wilson himself announced later that Austria was no longer to be allowed to rule over foreign peoples; and this means to the mind of every individual who has had even a little to do with the question of ethnographic conditions, the absolute disintegration of Austria.

I believe there is no importance whatsoever to be attributed to this conversation. I am of the opinion that this corridor matter can only be looked upon as an obligation which was to be imposed upon Germany in favor of Poland; whether in the form of a cession of territory or in the form of an agreement, is, of course, a different question. Why, that is like the idea that used to prevail of the future of the Baltic provinces and of Belgium.

The CHAIRMAN: Does your Excellency wish to reply?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Why, it has been made evident by statements which have been made at earlier meetings of the investigating committee, that the message of the President of the 22d of January, 1917, has been interpreted in various ways. I stated at that time, and I repeat it today, that Colonel House, acting for and on behalf of the President, told me that this message of the 22d of January, 1917, had been constructed in direct opposition to the demands made by the Entente, and that he considered it of definite importance to emphasize the fact that this contrast existed. It was precisely for this reason that he inserted this provision dealing with the free outlet to the sea, because he desired to make plain, by that phrase, that the demands of the Entente with regard to Austria could not be acceptable to Austria.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to make a statement at this point. If

my memory serves me right—we have not the records with us at the moment—

(Interruption.)

—Professor Bonn, have you the records there, by any chance?

Expert DR. BONN: I can read the passage in question from the message. Two passages are involved. The one having to do with the outlet to the sea reads as follows:

So far as practicable, moreover, every great people now struggling towards a full development of its resources and of its powers should be assured a direct outlet to the great highways of the sea. Where this can not be done by the cession of territory, it can no doubt be done by the neutralization of direct rights of way under the general guarantee which will assure the peace itself. With a right comity of arrangement, no nation need be shut away from free access to the open paths of the world's commerce.

And the paths of the sea must alike in law and in fact be free. The freedom of the seas is the *sine qua non* of peace, equality, and cooperation. No doubt a somewhat radical reconsideration of many of the rules of international practice hitherto thought to be established may be necessary in order to make the seas indeed free and common in practically all circumstances for the use of mankind.

That is, in the main, the one passage. I believe that it is so generally worded as to permit almost any interpretation possible.

The other passage refers to Poland, and reads as follows:

I take it for granted, for instance, if I may venture upon a single example, that statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland, and that henceforth inviolable security of life, of worship, and of industrial and social development should be guaranteed to all peoples who have lived hitherto under the power of governments devoted to a faith and purpose hostile to their own.

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, Professor Schaefer.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: It is absolutely plain from this first sentence, that Austria can not possibly have been meant: "So far as practicable, moreover, every great people now struggling towards a full development of its resources and of its powers should be assured a direct outlet to the great highways of the sea." Austria is no great people which is "now struggling towards a full development of its resources." That is absolutely inapplicable to Austria. But the Poles were such a people; it is beyond any doubt that Poland was referred to by this phrase, and that it involved no reference to Austria whatsoever. If Colonel House said something different, it is in conflict with the message.

The CHAIRMAN: To be sure, I do not quite agree with this view; for we must bear in mind the demands which the Entente Powers had made upon

Austria and which, in particular, they had made as a matter of guarantee to Italy: that Trieste was to become an Italian possession. In my opinion, this passage could very well be interpreted to mean that, under any and all circumstances, Austria was to be guaranteed this access to the sea.

And moreover, there was no necessity to assume that this reference applied solely to Poland or solely to Austria. It could apply just as well to Serbia, which was to have access to Saloniki, or to a port on the Adriatic in the form of an international servitude—a question which had long since been a matter of discussion.

And moreover, I should like to call attention to the fact that, in my opinion, an extraordinarily great and important distinction is to be made between the cession of a corridor and a mere servitude in international law, which imposes upon a State the obligation of guaranteeing that another State shall enjoy unmolested the rights of a traffic route over its territory.

If you please, Professor Schaefer.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: It is here stated in so many words: "Every great people now struggling towards a full development of its resources." That has no application to Austria. It does apply to Poland, and for aught I know applies to Serbia too. But certainly Austria was not interested to that extent in the Serbian question. It is absolutely applicable to Poland, and the words were, consequently, and in any event, pronounced with direct reference to this circumstance, particularly in view of the fact that Poland was mentioned beforehand, to wit, that Poland was to be united, independent, and autonomous. Every human being knows what that means, and that it was meant to apply also to those Poles who were not under Russian rule, that is, to the disadvantage of Austria and to the disadvantage of Prussian Germany. My opinion is that no application of the art of interpretation can read anything out of this passage other than that Poland was, above all else, the center of thought.

Delegate WARMUTH: The sentence in the message is one distinctly laying down a principle. I should like, however, to announce myself as participating in the view which has just been expressed by Privy Councilor Schaefer to the extent that Poland appears to be far more involved than does Austria; yes, and for the very reason that at that time Austria already had access to the sea, it would seem that the phrase could have no application whatsoever to Austria; and that Austria could only be included in the idea if, perchance, as the result of the peace conditions, as the Entente desired to impose them, Austria was to lose this access to the sea, and that, therefore, the United States would be unwilling to permit this. Taking this view, which according to my opinion points first of all toward Poland in this connection, particularly when we realize that at that time the question of the development of Poland occupied a very prominent position, and that the Entente had this very development of Poland in mind, and most

particularly in connection with the idea of an outlet to the sea, it certainly would appear to me to be somewhat strange for his Excellency not to have called Colonel House's attention, at the very moment when this conversation took place, to the question of whether or not this constituted a very direct reference to Poland. In this connection, I should like to ask his Excellency a question, that is, if the question of whether Poland was referred to was not asked.

The CHAIRMAN: Professor Bonn.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that, after all, we are simply interested in the following questions: Does this remark concerning the free access to the sea refer exclusively to Poland, or is it a general phrase? If it were to apply exclusively to Poland, there would be no reason to avoid mention of it in connection with the reference to an autonomous Poland and to wait until a subsequent paragraph was reached. But besides this, I believe that, together with the cases to which it is claimed that it refers, there was still another case which President Wilson had in mind, namely, the Constantinople question of the free access of Russia to the sea, which interested people at that time far more than the Polish question. I believe that the only thing that was intended was the announcement of a phrase of general application. Wilson was always fond of making statements having a general bearing. I do not believe that, at that time, there were very many concrete conceptions in the gentlemen's minds. For today, even, we have in Keynes' book, a splendid example right from the enemy's camp, of what went on in Paris; and the upshot of it all is that the Americans, or at least the President, at a point of time some two years later than this move, was absolutely unprepared to meet any and all individual questions, had no working material, looked upon European affairs from the very remotest perspective, considered general principles, but was totally ignorant as to individual facts or cases. I believe that, taking this practical experience as a basis, we should take care not to submit to such a microscopically critical examination a pronunciamento which was announced to the whole world, and whose purpose was that everyone representing the most widely divergent interests was to find in the message exactly what he wanted to find in it—for otherwise, they could not have been brought to the conference table—thus putting ourselves in the position of finding in these general phrases a solution to every single problem which we know and with which the people over there were acquainted only in the most general way.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Of course, the Polish question was discussed by Colonel House and myself. But at that time, I always took the stand, and I have stated that to be the case here, that no suggestion was ever made to me of a cession of German territory during the negotiations on this peace without victory; that it was always expressed to be the wish of the American Government to bring both belligerent Powers to a con-

ference table where they themselves could come to an understanding as to how the war could be brought to an end. Thereafter, the United States desired to have a second conference at which the league of nations and other similar questions would be made the subject of discussion. It is true that it was the intention of the President to offer his friendly assistance if the belligerent Powers could not reach an agreement. But on numerous occasions the President expressly stated in his speeches that he would not bind the American people to any conditions of any kind which had to do merely with European questions.

Delegate WARMUTH: Your Excellency just stated that in the conversations which you had with Colonel House, the question of the cession of territory had never come up. But was the possibility of a servitude ever discussed, which, after all, would have signified a definite attack upon the sovereign rights of a State? Having Germany in mind, the very fact of a suggestion and the discussion of the question of a servitude would constitute for me a very definite indication that, in so doing, Poland was had in mind—Poland, which would receive its outlet to the sea in this precise way, that is, by such a servitude. Is it a fact—and this is my question—that this question of a servitude was not touched upon in any way, so far as Germany was concerned? Was the situation simply this—that the possibility that a cession of territory was considered was out of the question?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The question of a servitude was not discussed in flat terms as such. It is perfectly true that it was always stated that we would possibly reach an agreement with regard to a new Poland, by means of which Poland would have a means of communication with Danzig. But I at that time always assumed that that was our intention too; for we ourselves had announced from the battlements that it was our desire to found a Polish State.

The CHAIRMAN: I may state, in this connection, that it is certainly the case that when this question was a matter of public discussion, the thought was repeatedly expressed that Danzig and Koenigsberg should be thrown open as free ports, and that Poland would be given this right of untrammelled communication by virtue of agreements which would cover the rivers as well as the railroads, and that, whereas the ordinary case was that the censorship was applied with most extraordinary severity to all questions of this kind, in this case, on the contrary, there never was—at least so far as I know; I myself published articles on these questions—the slightest objection on the part of the censorship authorities.

If your Excellency has stated that Colonel House gave this interpretation which covered Austria—a circumstance which does not exclude it from being applicable to other nations—we shall certainly have to assume that each individual is always the best interpreter of the meaning of his own words, and that, in this case, Colonel House, in his capacity of mouthpiece

of President Wilson, is probably the best qualified to interpret the meaning of those propositions in the points made by Wilson.

Delegate WARMUTH: Your Excellency just said that it was your opinion that the German authorities—that is to say, the Imperial Government—took the view that if Poland was to be established as the free State, which was desired, it must naturally have an access to the sea. Has your Excellency any reason for believing that this right of way was to be at the cost of German territory, in the sense of a territorial easement which would, after all, inevitably constitute a burden imposed upon German territory? In a word, has any positive fact ever been brought to your attention to indicate that the Imperial Government ever really earnestly considered imposing the burden of a servitude upon the German people in order to create a free access to the sea for Poland in this way?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, I already stated that at that time I never received any instructions from Berlin regarding the President's message, and since I had received no instructions, my attitude toward Colonel House with regard to these questions was reticent in the extreme, because I never desired to commit my government in advance. I have always considered what I have already stated to be merely my point of view, based upon so much of the German public opinion as I was able to catch. So it came about that I assumed that agreements such as the Chairman has already referred to would be acceded to by us in case it came to the question of establishing a Polish State.

Expert DR. BONN: In this connection, your Excellency was probably thinking of some such agreement as was involved in the guarantee contained in the peace treaty: That the intercourse from East Prussia with the rest of the country, by means of the Polish corridor, should be maintained untrammelled, of course, without any territorial guarantee for us—how the matter is working out for the moment is, of course, a different question; or you are thinking of the other form of arrangement which has been selected to our disadvantage, to the effect that some particular free port should be established in Hamburg and at various other places, if I remember correctly, in favor of Czecho-Slovakia. I assume that you had these methods in mind in the course of your remarks, but that you did not have in mind any such arrangement as would guarantee to Poland a strip of land either on both sides of the river or on both sides of a railroad line crossing German territory, which should not only guarantee free intercourse to the Poles, but the actual dominion over this territory for the purpose of exercising sovereign rights in connection with this free intercourse.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: May I reply to this by stating that, in my opinion, what we are discussing here today is a matter which, after all, we look upon after the fact and, consequently, which assumes quite a different aspect than the one which was presented to me at that time. At

that time, the only subject of my negotiations with the American Government was the question of that government's bringing us all to the conference table. And all these questions were to be taken up afterwards between the governments themselves. Consequently, I did not permit myself to enter upon such details, because that was not part of my official duties.

Delegate WARMUTH: I simply desire to emphasize once more the point that, so far as this point of view is concerned, it was, after all, but a personal conception, and that, as you just said, the information which you received from Berlin was not at all such as to govern your course of action, and that this is nothing but a purely personal view.

Expert V. ROMBERG: It seems to me that it would have been a very important thing for the purposes of our information, that all these questions should have been discussed with Colonel House. Since we knew that the Americans were to play a part in the mediation, my feeling is that it would have been a matter of extraordinary importance for us to have received exact information as to how the Americans felt about these questions, even if it was their intention to withhold themselves from any participation in matters really involving territorial questions. I had always assumed that all of these questions would have been individually discussed with Colonel House in the course of confidential interviews, so that our Embassy would have been completely informed as to how Colonel House and President Wilson looked upon the possibilities of peace in their application to individual instances. And after all, it certainly looks as if Colonel House had expressed himself quite definitely to the effect that he would not venture to suggest to us that we should cede any territory to Poland; for Count Bernstorff has just said to us that no one ever ventured to suggest the cession of any German territory. This assumes at the outset that this question was discussed from the standpoint of detail, to the extent that we knew, as a matter of fact, that America did not intend, for instance, to take any Polish territory away from us. In my opinion, it would be very desirable, for the sake of clearness, if Count Bernstorff would go somewhat further into detail with regard to his discussions with Colonel House concerning all these questions.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can simply repeat that the American Government always took the view that it had no intention of involving itself in any way in the details of any European arrangements. The President told me this not only with his own lips, but he announced the fact repeatedly in the course of his speeches. And he stated repeatedly: "I can only act if I have the American people behind me, and the American people have no interest whatsoever in the details of any territorial agreements." Unfortunately, and to our sorrow, we learned at Versailles that this assertion was absolutely correct. Consequently, there was absolutely no reason for me to talk over the details of any European arrangement with the Ameri-

cans, and all the less so since I was expressly informed in all my instructions, that any interference on the part of the Americans in the territorial questions of Europe was not wanted.

Delegate WARMUTH: Your Excellency stated that the imposing of a burden upon Germany in the form of a servitude, in order to create a free outlet to the sea for Poland, was, in your opinion, something which could be included in the peace conditions as acceptable from the German point of view. I believe that I have understood you aright?

(Agreement on the part of Witness Ambassador COUNT V. BERNSTORFF.) For otherwise, we would, without further ado, have abhorred this suggestion as absolutely out of the question, so far as Germany was concerned. So that you were always of the opinion that Germany might be able to enter into some such servitude agreement without doing herself serious injury and without involving her honor. At the same time, the imposition of such a burden upon Germany would be looked upon as something rather drastic, which would infringe upon the sovereignty of Germany in no small way and, consequently, there is very good reason to believe that this view of yours would not be able to count upon undivided backing in Germany.

Now your Excellency has just stated to us that it was nothing but your own thoughts and feelings in this regard on which you depended, and that you received no instructions from Germany. Perhaps it would be appropriate to inquire whether it is not possible that some news reached you in some other connection, from some authoritative source in Germany, which operated as a support to this personal view of yours, as to whether, perhaps, when the occasion offered—and this is quite natural—in some way or other this Polish problem was discussed, either through you or through Berlin, as to whether, in a word, in some way or other some suggestion was given along these lines; I will not say an absolutely definite suggestion, but one of such a nature as to amount to a support of this view. I am putting this to you, not for the purpose of repeating a question which I have already submitted to you, and which you have already answered, but merely in the manner which I have just employed.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I do not know whether the gentlemen of the committee, in examining the records, have found any document according to the terms of which I am supposed to have received instructions with regard to Poland. According to my recollection, the word "Poland" was never used in any official instructions sent from Germany. I believe that this never was the case.

Expert V. ROMBERG: I should like to add the following at this point. The Polish question was, at that time, a very live question, and, so far as I know, was being pushed in America by the Poles themselves with extraordinary energy. At least, that was what was always assumed to be the case in Europe. I do not know whether it actually was the case. I should cer-

tainly have believed, anyway, that the proposition that, under no circumstances, could we conclude a peace which would mean a cession of German territory in the East would have constituted a very important theme for discussion in our conferences with the United States. After all, a certain amount of knowledge of the intentions of both sides was a condition precedent to bringing us both together at the conference table. If the Americans were depending upon bringing us together at the conference table, it was, of course, necessary for them to have some confidential knowledge beforehand of the conditions under which it was possible to bring this about—as to whether this or that could be expected of the Germans, or of the Entente. Otherwise, it is really not clear to my mind how they could have approached the problem at all. I assume that, in any case, the Americans must have sounded the members of the Entente in detail as to what the conditions were under which it would be possible to induce them to come to the conference table. My point is that, in any event, it would have been very interesting for us to know, if we could have obtained the information, what the views of the Americans were on these vital questions. Even if they had no desire to interfere in territorial questions, they certainly had to determine the conditions which were essential to taking the first steps leading to an exchange of views. But as I have stated, if that was not the case, we must rest satisfied with what we have. Our duty is simply to establish the facts which were known to our Embassy on the subject, and what it was able to communicate to our government in the premises, since that was always of vital importance so far as the decisions which were taken in Berlin were concerned. It is our duty to establish these things—not what might have happened and what should have happened, but what actually did happen—for what reason it was that the Berlin decisions were reached, and whether the Berlin Government was sufficiently informed concerning the purposes of our opponents and of the presumptive peace mediator.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that questions are being put here which Count v. Bernstorff, in view of what he has already told us, is absolutely not in a position to answer. As a matter of fact, these questions were not taken up.

Such servitudes existing under international law need not, moreover, operate unilaterally only; rather by far can they be bilateral in effect, and operate completely to the interests of both contracting States. We specially agreed to servitudes of that kind in the matter of intercourse from Poland to Danzig and to Koenigsberg, in the Russian treaty of commerce of 1894, which served German interests to the highest degree, in order, for instance, to transport grain shipments by way of our ports; in other words, agreements covering the Marienburg-Mlawka railroad. And, moreover, it would naturally have been very probable in this case that, if we had agreed to submit to the effect of a servitude of that kind, we should have

received Poland's obligation, in return, to permit the shipment of German and Russian goods in German-Russian trade, under similar conditions, which would have been just as advantageous to us. But this matter does not get us ahead very far, comparatively speaking. For after what Count Bernstorff told us, he is simply unable to give us any further information on the point, for the simple reason that these individual matters were not subjected to discussion.

And I would like, moreover, to call attention to the fact that the question of reciprocity, if we were to give Poland an outlet to the sea, whether by way of the Vistula or by way of the Pregel or in connection with the railroads, that the question of Polish obligations as regards allowing German-Russian traffic to pass over the Polish railroads was a factor in the discussions, too.

Delegate WARMUTH: I, at least, am convinced that it was not intended that Poland's aspirations with regard to the access to the sea were to be of such a, let me say, harmless character as is here suggested. To repeat: what I had in mind by putting my former inquiry was, of course, to find out what the governing factor could possibly have been which brought Count v. Bernstorff to this point of view. I realize the fact that there is nothing to be found on this point in the records. At least, so far as I am acquainted with them, the records throw no light on the subject. It is precisely for this reason that I am putting this particular question, since the records contain no solution as to whether or not certain other circumstances existed which are not reported in the records but which could have supported the view which Count Bernstorff took. For the way that I reason is this: After all, it is a matter of such importance, and it is of such particular significance in connection with Wilson's peace move, as to make it appear to me that it was the right thing for Count v. Bernstorff to do in his capacity as Ambassador, to make it a point to go deeply into this question, and to examine in detail everything in the way of material having a bearing on the subject which was at his disposal. So that, if it is true that you entertained such a strikingly important assumption as that of the burdening of the German Government with a servitude—let us say—you must certainly have had some definite reason in support of this view. It does not seem as if the only thing involved was a purely personal point of view, which, when all is said and done, was based on absolutely vague suppositions, but, in my opinion, it certainly seems as if something definite must have lain at the bottom of such an assumption. The purpose of my inquiry is to find out exactly what that assumption was.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In order to answer both questions which have been put to me, I would have to revert to the telegram which, in my opinion, is the most important step in all the negotiations. So far as I recollect, this telegram reached here on January 3. I looked upon this

telegram—and this is in obvious conflict with the view of the Foreign Office—as a formal proposal for a peace mediation by Wilson. At that time, House had told me that it was impossible that a peace conference could be brought about without being preceded by confidential negotiations which, consequently, it was our purpose to consummate. And he had then made the proposal that these negotiations should be carried on between Wilson, Colonel House, and myself, exclusively and in the strictest confidence. It was House's desire, possibly, to go to England in order to find out on what basis these negotiations could be commenced. It was only in case I received full authorization to carry on the negotiations that we would have gone into all these questions more in detail. But I was never authorized to do this, and I have always laid particular stress upon the fact that this telegram reached Berlin on January 3, in other words, six days before the conclusion was reached with regard to the U-boat war. So that the resolution to launch the U-boat war was made with full knowledge of the fact that the purpose of the American Government was to mediate.

Delegate DR. BONN: With respect to the Polish question, it is quite true that in the United States there was a far-spread interest in Poland, but I am absolutely convinced that, if these persons, provided that they were not Poles but Americans, had been asked whether Danzig was on the Vistula or on the Oder, there would have been an even division of opinion.

But after all, the most important point seems to me to be the one involved in the question put by his Excellency v. Romberg. We have already taken up this question in former hearings, and we have heard a great deal said about it. We have naturally heard, on the one side, if I recollect correctly, that Count v. Bernstorff was not to go into the actual discussion of a peace mediation. Consequently, it devolved upon Count Bernstorff to give as purely personal views all the statements of opinion which he made in this regard and which had to do with the material points involved. I believe that this task was made all the easier by the fact, your Excellency, that you had no occasion to make known what the objective opinions of the authorities were with regard to these individual questions, since the fact is that, as the result of poor means of communication, you only received insufficient information with regard to these questions.

But the item which seems to me to be the most important in this connection is the following: The fact is that we were again and again urged by the Americans to tell them what our peace conditions were. The point upon which you insisted was—as Mr. v. Romberg himself has already stated—that Germany's peace conditions should not be disclosed to the Americans in the shape of personal views of your own, your Excellency, but in the form of the opinion of the German Imperial Government. If I recollect correctly, this was not done at any time prior to the breaking off of relations. I believe that the authorization to disclose confidentially our peace conditions

to the President came into your hands simultaneously with the telegram breaking off relations. So that the result would be, if my memory is correct with regard to these matters, that you were able to arrange for opportunities to take up with the Americans matters only of a general nature and, as a matter of fact, generalities representing your personal view; and this on the basis of the instructions which you had received, as well as for the reason that your instructions were insufficient; and that you urged that positive facts be submitted, and that positive proposals be submitted to the Americans, confidentially, but that these definite proposals were transmitted to you too late in order to permit their being made use of. Speaking generally, was that not the actual course which matters took?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes, that is in agreement with the facts; I have nothing to add to that statement.

The CHAIRMAN: Then we can drop this point and pass on to point 4.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In point 4, I am asked whether I wish to answer the statements of General Ludendorff, and, in particular: (a) "You did not give the Imperial Chancellor correct information." The charge that I did not supply the Imperial Chancellor with correct information is, in my opinion, the expression of a purely personal opinion which I can answer by simply pointing to the fact that, from the very beginning, my reports announced the view-point that the U-boat war would involve us in war with the United States. I do not believe that it can be said that, in this regard, I gave the German Government false information; for, unfortunately, the American Government broke off relations with us on the same day as that on which the U-boat war was announced. The fact is that my prophecies were carried out, to my extreme regret, with the greatest expedition. But again, this charge might be deemed to be based on the assumption that I had represented the President's intention to move on behalf of peace in false colors, and that I had painted the prospect of this peace mediation in too rosy a hue. As I have already stated, that is even today a matter of supposition, namely, the conjecture as to whether peace would have resulted from a peace mediation by Wilson.

I can simply state what I have so often stated here, that I am still of the opinion that peace would have resulted from a mediation on behalf of peace by Wilson, and this particularly—as I should like to take the occasion of again especially emphasizing—because I have been charged, both in and out of this hall, with having had too much confidence in Wilson personally. I was not controlled by factors having to do with Wilson as a man, but by the circumstance which was conclusive, so far as I was concerned, that the Entente would never have been able to conquer us without American assistance; and I am today more than ever of the opinion that it could not have been done. It was for this reason that the United States had to be kept from participating in the war.

And I am all the more convinced that peace would have resulted by what is contained in the new book which was written by Keynes and to which Professor Bonn has referred; for Keynes constantly emphasizes the point—stated by Bonar Law himself in the English parliament in so many words to be the fact—that England was absolutely finished at the commencement of the year 1917, so far as finances were concerned, and would no longer have been able to carry on the war without American assistance.

That is all that I care to say with regard to question (a).

Delegate WARMUTH: This is precisely the point; namely, that the Imperial Chancellor was left by your Excellency without exact information with regard to the situation in this way—that at that time, Count v. Bernstorff, you did not call to the Imperial Chancellor's attention the facts which, summed up, meant that we would have succeeded in stopping the United States from participating in the war only if we had accepted American mediation. At that time, that was of vital interest. For this was the circumstance which at that time was the main reason for the angry words spoken by Ludendorff, to wit, that on that occasion, and to a certain extent as a surprise, this matter was presented in these proceedings as something absolutely new. But I may venture to assume, in view of the fact that your Excellency sticks to it, that you always kept Berlin informed on this point? Is not this the case? I should like to ask you to make a further statement along this line.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Of course, today, without examining the records, I am no longer in a position to state exactly the terms in which I clothed the statement. But as I look back, my feeling is that it was absolutely unnecessary to make that the subject of a report. For I repeatedly received telegrams from Berlin, signed by the Imperial Chancellor, and I received oral instructions from him, too, in which it was always stated: "If peace does not come, the U-boat war will be inevitable." Since that was the standpoint of the German Government, the other conclusion follows automatically, in my opinion.

Delegate WARMUTH: It seems to me that that is somewhat different from the circumstance which Ludendorff characterized at that time as the vital point, namely, the failure to send information that nothing but the acceptance of mediation by the United States would have avoided war with America—the very thing which your Excellency yourself states with such emphasis, to wit, that the acceptance of America's mediation was absolutely essential to Germany. At least, as I recollect the earlier hearings of the investigating committee, you always made a particular point of this. I would like to have a reply to this question, whether you, your Excellency, kept Berlin constantly informed in this regard.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I believe that it is made plain by my reports and telegrams that for a period of two years I wrote practically

nothing else than that we should have to accept peace mediation by the United States. I believe that there can be no doubt on that point.

The CHAIRMAN: Then perhaps we can pass over to Question 4 (b).

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Question 4 (b): "That you did not oppose British propaganda as energetically as you were called upon to do, so that later the American soldier came to look upon the war which was waged against us as in the nature of a crusade."

I found myself, when in America, in the unpleasant situation—as was exactly the case with all members of the Embassy and all other gentlemen who took part in these matters—of always being charged in Germany with having made too little use of propaganda, and in the United States, of being charged with making too much use of it. My personal opinion is that we in America did all that it was humanly possible to do. To submit proof of this is, of course, a very difficult matter; for that, also, is, naturally, a matter of personal opinion, whether we should have attempted to do more, or less.

There were times in the United States when German propaganda was absolutely out of the question. In my opinion, this period was represented by the first six months following the *Lusitania* case. At that time, there was such feeling in the United States as to result in any propaganda issued by us being taken ill. During the months which preceded the *Lusitania* case, on the other hand, everything was done in the way of propaganda, in my opinion, which could possibly have been done. And as a matter of fact, we ourselves founded the propaganda bureau in New York of which former Secretary of State Dr. Dernburg was put in charge. As many articles were prepared and written, etc., as was in any way possible. So that I could not tell you wherein we fell short in the matter. On the other hand, I admit that it was very difficult for us to oppose the British propaganda, because of its marked superiority over ours on account of direct cable connections. I do not know whether you want me to go into details in the matter.

Delegate WARMUTH: I would consider that very vital.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps Professor Bonn would like to put a question at this point.

Expert DR. BONN: Your Excellency, were you aware of the fact that a great number of very amusing books were written by the Entente, in which the horrible performances of the German propaganda were described in a way which, I must admit, calls for no less than absolute admiration? I believe that if you were speaking of personal impressions, there is no doubt but that we, too, have such personal impressions to furnish; not, however, impressions of those who took part, but the impressions of our opponents. If you know these books—perhaps you know the works of Alphaud and Lechartier's book, *Intrigues Diplomatiques*—then, I believe, you will be able to show that a great number of the things which were

ascribed to German propaganda in these books never took place at all. But I believe that, in this case, we could rely upon the testimony of the other side, and state that we did not fail in the matter of results, since the other side had to combine all its energies to hold down the German propaganda. It might be interesting, if it is the desire of the committee, to hear some statements with regard to details concerning the German propaganda which are now perfectly well known. There is absolutely no reason for dealing in mysteries; three volumes of the American Senate committee tell all there is to be told. But the field is a very broad one, and I do not know whether the committee would desire to have you make a detailed report of the matter.

Delegate WARMUTH: I would like to emphasize the request that we be informed thereof in detail; for this very charge is one which continues to be made—and as a matter of fact, it is a very serious one—that we availed ourselves altogether too little of propaganda activities, and did not go far enough in opposing British propaganda.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The chief propaganda was carried on by Dr. Dernburg. You gentlemen probably know that Dr. Dernburg was sent to the United States for the purpose of carrying through a loan there, and that, as the result of political conditions existing in the United States at that time, the loan was not made. So that at that time, Dr. Dernburg was there in America without having anything in particular to do. And so he busied himself, by the way, with writing articles which were very successful from the standpoint of propaganda. When I first went to America, I attempted to convince the American press of the correctness of our standpoint by means of interviews. But in this connection, I came to be convinced that I would throw my own personal diplomatic character, which was of course essential for carrying on the negotiations with the government, wholly into the background if I engaged in a daily battle with the press, and so it was with particular satisfaction that, by virtue of the newspaper articles of Dr. Dernburg, the latter had been appointed by Berlin to take his official seat in New York as the director of propaganda and manage matters from there. The consequence was that the propaganda was handled entirely apart from matters of the Embassy as long as Dr. Dernburg remained in America. It was handled from New York. I would, therefore, urgently request that, if it is the desire of the committee to have exact details gone into here with regard to propaganda activities, in addition to myself either Dr. Dernburg or one of his coworkers, for instance, Counselor of Legation Führ, be heard in order that I may avoid making erroneous statements here with regard to details. For I can only repeat that I myself did not manage the propaganda, and this for political reasons which were compelling so far as I was concerned.

The propaganda did not manifest itself by press articles alone, but took

the form of commercial measures which were, in part, very successful. For instance, it had to do with putting obstacles in the way of the exportation of ammunition and, to a very marked extent, with matters of film production, in that we had numerous films sent over from Germany and subsequently exhibited. In this connection, however, I should like to emphasize the fact that it was exactly this film production concerning which we have been charged with insufficient activities in this connection, which had to be stopped in view of the fact that it was not possible for us to receive the necessary films, since they were not sent to us by the military.

The CHAIRMAN: What we will probably have to do under the circumstances will be to hear what Dr. Dernburg has to say on this question. The committee would then determine whether we would care to call him as a witness.

Delegate WARMUTH: Did the possibility exist, by any chance, of persuading American film owners or film manufacturers, or of getting them to move in such a way as to become active in matters of propaganda on our behalf, or was this absolutely out of the question as the result of national characteristics?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, a number of Americans offered their services and they worked with us, too. Naturally, these were mainly German-Americans. We worked in every direction that we could. I am willing to admit that our propaganda was weak in one point only, and this was that it was not possible to get ahead of the English reports because the British had control of the cables.

Expert DR. BONN: At that time, your Excellency, did you have at your disposal means for meeting the costs of carrying on propaganda of this kind on the greatest scale, without referring to Berlin for authority to do so, or were you always under the obligation of taking up the matter with Berlin first?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I had absolutely no means at my disposal. Privy Councilor Albert, the present Under-Secretary of State, who was in the United States as the representative of the Z.E.G., was supplied with large amounts of money for purchasing purposes, and I was able to avail myself of these sums for certain purposes. But I was supplied with no actual funds whereas Dr. Dernburg had his own money. I would not like to make any statement here with regard to amounts, because it is possible that my statements might be erroneous.

Delegate DR. BONN: In this connection, the following points occur to me, in the main: In order to carry on propaganda on a large scale under these conditions, one is bound to have large sums at one's disposal, even if purely legitimate propaganda only is involved; and the only question which can be raised in the complaints which are made is that we did not sufficiently push legitimate propaganda. I do not mean to say that people are attempting

to charge you with the fact that you failed sufficiently to push illegitimate propaganda. But very great resources are necessary, even for conducting propaganda of the most legitimate kind. The question before us now is whether, for instance, it was possible with the funds available, and acting alone, to buy, for instance, or to establish, newspapers in the United States, or whether it was always necessary to ask the central office at Berlin for permission to do so. Do you know anything about this, your Excellency?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I have a certain knowledge of this much: that it was impossible to expend any great sum without getting permission from Berlin. Since I myself have now published my *Mémoires of the War*, I have talked over this question with one of the gentlemen who took part in the propaganda, and the result of our investigations was that we had only spent one million dollars for German propaganda in the United States.

Delegate WARMUTH: Did not your Excellency once have occasion to take up this very matter with the Foreign Office in Berlin, and to take the ground that you be permitted to have a far freer hand in the premises? It was, of course, quite impossible to carry on a propaganda which would be effective even to a certain extent, in view of the distance from headquarters and in view of the difficulties of communication, if you had to ask permission from Berlin every time you wanted to busy yourself in any way along these lines. The results of the entire propaganda were jeopardized from the outset by such a situation, for the main point in matters of propaganda consists in being able to overcome false reports by quick action. In response to any such request of yours to the Foreign Office in Berlin, or to the Imperial Chancellor, or to any other person in authority, did you ever get a negative reply, referring you to purely bureaucratic methods which involved the submission of a request by you before you undertook to carry out any task of importance?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: So far as my memory serves me—I should have to verify this in order to avoid making an erroneous statement—this was the way the matter was handled, to wit, that when the management of the propaganda was handed over to Dr. Dernburg, an estimate was made in connection with him concerning the amount to be expended. So far as I remember, he went into the matter with Berlin in detail, as to how much was to be expended.

In this connection, I should like to emphasize an important matter which often escapes attention; and that is the distance between Washington and New York. To initiate propaganda in Washington was absolutely out of the question; this could be done only in New York, and for that reason it was a matter of the greatest satisfaction to me that the Foreign Office arranged to relieve the Embassy wholly of the propaganda question and to establish an independent propaganda bureau in New York; for otherwise, I should have had to spend my time continuously on the train between Washington

and New York. Even as matters stood, I had to do that very often. But if I had been obliged to manage the propaganda in New York, I would have been able to do absolutely nothing else than travel back and forth. It followed that I was very thankful indeed when Dr. Dernburg came prepared to take it over, and he did this practically on his own responsibility. It was only every week or two when I came to New York, that we had conferences together in which we talked over the most important matters which came up.

Delegate WARMUTH: I do not understand that my question has, as yet, been answered by your Excellency. We have just heard that Dr. Dernburg acted very independently in his capacity as chief of the propaganda system, and, moreover, we have heard that you had occasion every week or two to confer with him concerning the most important matters which came up; it is the question, after all as to what extent resources were placed at our disposal for the purpose of carrying out a really effective propaganda, which seems to me to be of the greatest importance. I assume that it was not only Dernburg who handled these matters with Berlin, but I should be inclined to think that it was you who, as Ambassador, were Dernburg's official superior, and for whom the importance of the propaganda question would have assumed a particular significance; you, who would have found occasion, based on the absolute inadequacy of the means with which you had to work, to submit to Berlin, acting in a capacity which was quite different from that of Dernburg, and with the weight of an authority quite different from his, the following request: "Give me unlimited powers to carry on the propaganda as I need it, and as Dr. Dernburg requires it." Your Excellency did not reply to this phase of my question.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: To be sure, I did not make a reply of this kind, because—as is obvious—I proceeded on different premises. I am convinced, and I can state so frankly, that I would not have gone further in the propaganda matter if I had been free to proceed with it, and I am of the opinion that we made too much use of propaganda rather than too little. I shall always emphasize this point. If I am questioned, I shall say that if we made a mistake in the United States, it was that we dealt too much in propaganda rather than too little.

(Delegate WARMUTH: That is certainly very interesting!)

Expert DR. BONN: The features essential to a successful propaganda do not consist in a great plant which constantly publishes statements, but in the fact that the policy which is advocated in the course of the propaganda is in agreement with the policy which is being actually followed. The propaganda activities of his Excellency Dernburg came to an end as the result of the *Lusitania*. Thereafter, as your Excellency has already stated, six months went by without it's being possible to conduct any propaganda at all. From this we must conclude that there is no purpose whatsoever in

conducting propaganda if the policy adopted does not run a course parallel with that of the propaganda. The main difficulty in connection with German propaganda in the United States was to be found, I believe, in the fact that the policy which was announced by the propaganda itself was, again and again, interfered with by political incidents. I do not know whether this impression of mine is right or not.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can simply confirm what Professor Bonn has said, since he knows this at least as well as I do, having been active in propaganda matters in the United States during the last years. I can simply subscribe to the proposition that, since our national policy did not meet with the approval of the Americans, it is obvious that the conduct of our propaganda was made extraordinarily difficult. Try as we might to avoid this, our propaganda methods would be interfered with in spite of it all.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Count, do you not, perhaps, agree with me in the thought that the propaganda would have been more effective *per se* if it had not had for its only purpose that of proving to the Americans that the war was being carried on for the purpose of maintaining ourselves as a nation, for the purpose of our vital interests, but if, on the other hand, we had backed up this propaganda with a great basic idea on the German side; if we had taken the initiative in this matter of the idea; and if, as was the case with our opponents, we had assured the world at the right time that the purpose of the Germans in carrying on the conflict was the establishment of a new age based on peace and right? Is it not possible that the failure of the German propaganda was to be traced to this?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: This brings us, of course, to the question of philosophy of life. If, in our propaganda in the United States, we had unqualifiedly found ourselves in agreement with the ideas which governed the American people, then of course we would have been much more successful with our propaganda. But since that was not the case—at least, no one believed that what we wanted was a peace of understanding, the natural result was that the propaganda fell to the ground.

Delegate DR. BONN: Count, are you of the opinion that the so-called conspiracies of which the Americans complained operated against the efficiency of the propaganda?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The so-called conspiracies are based, I am convinced, for the most part upon inventions. And this conviction was recently expressed publicly by one of the most prominent judges in the United States, to wit, that 99 per cent of the German conspiracies were simply matters of invention, and that, as a matter of fact, only 1 per cent actually existed—a circumstance which I, too, am free to admit. These conspiracies were made great use of to our disadvantage from the standpoint of propaganda, and their importance was tremendously exaggerated. But during the period which was the decisive period, politically speaking,

that is, for the whole year of 1916, they had been absolutely and completely laid at rest, and, in my opinion, they would have exercised no further influence; it was only by the entrance of the United States into the war that they again became utilized for the purposes of a renewed propaganda, and then, it is true, with very great success, and particularly because they were exaggerated beyond all reason.

Delegate WARMUTH: The proposition which your Excellency put, that the fact was that too much propaganda, rather than too little, had been carried on over there, is certainly in such flat contradiction with the view which is wide-spread over here, a view which was also expressed by General Ludendorff at that time, that it would seem to be necessary to go into it somewhat further.

I take it, since I too am of the opinion, in which I probably am in agreement with you, that propaganda can not be overdone in point of amount, that is, that the essence of propaganda consists in working, as much as possible, *en masse*—I take it that your proposition simply meant that a feature of the “too much propaganda” consisted in the fact that propaganda of the wrong kind had been used—a circumstance which was caused by the large mass of the propaganda. Where propaganda is conducted on a large scale, the possibility of having something erroneous occur is much greater than where propaganda is conducted only on a small scale. Now I expect that I can assume, further, that the false, the injurious propaganda, was not to be attributed to erroneous measures taken by the official propaganda bureau as handled by Dr. Dernburg and by yourself, and that, in this connection perhaps, the cause was a private propaganda which was beyond your control. In connection with this point, I should request your Excellency to give us an explanation, bearing particular reference to the question of why the propaganda was erroneous, that is, what were those particular features which were wrong? Such extraordinary importance is attached to this feature—and General Ludendorff considered it of great importance—that I believe that a discussion of this particular phase would not result in an undue waste of time.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: If I stated that I believed that too much propaganda had been conducted, I had in mind mainly the difference of opinion which perhaps, came up most of all between the government here and myself. I unintermittently requested, during the course of the entire two and a half years, that neither special agents nor agents for the purpose of propaganda be sent to the United States, that we ourselves would take care of everything that needed to be done there. In spite of this—I do not care to give numbers in this connection—a vast number of propaganda agents was sent over. Almost every human being who said that he had been to the United States at some time during his life was at once given a ticket and told: “Now, go over there and get to work.” This happened in such

numbers that, in my opinion, the result was simply this, that the purpose became apparent and created feeling. That is what my remarks had reference to.

The CHAIRMAN: For the rest, we shall probably go more deeply into this when we take Dr. Scheele's testimony. We can perhaps take it up on that occasion.

Now we come to the next question.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The fifth question reads: "Do you adhere to your statement that General Ludendorff stated, at the interview of May 4, 1917, that he did not wish an American peace, since the submarine war would finish the business in three months?"

It was in connection with this question that the greatest difference came up between General Ludendorff and myself, consisting in the fact that General Ludendorff obviously understood that I took the view that he wanted to conclude no peace whatsoever. To make such a ridiculous statement naturally never occurred to me. All that I wanted to say was—and this is the ground that I continue to take today—that in the course of our conversation General Ludendorff told me that we did not want peace mediation by the Americans. Whether by this expression "we did not want," he referred to the Imperial Government, himself, or the Supreme High Command of the Army, is a matter on which I can give no information today. I took it, however, as a collective reference to the authorities in Berlin. I can simply state that, in my opinion, this view has been confirmed by the statements of all the witnesses made under oath before the committee; for the gentlemen have all said that they did not want American peace mediation. Consequently, I believe that my remarks are in unqualified accord with what has been stated here under oath.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that if there is a contradiction here, it is due to a mistaken conception of what was said by his Excellency Count v. Bernstorff on the part of General Ludendorff. I myself, acting as chairman at that time, announced the fact that it is likely that General Ludendorff misunderstood this statement; for it did not go to the length of meaning that General Ludendorff opposed every peace of every kind, but simply opposed that peace which America desired to bring about; in other words, he was opposed to mediation by the United States because he expected an unfavorable result.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Question 6: "What justification had you for the statement which has been contradicted, that your visit to Ludendorff was a mere matter of courtesy? Had the Supreme High Command of the Army invited you to a visit? Did you repair directly to the Supreme High Command of the Army for the purpose of bringing about a conference?"

I should like to answer the first question by saying that I considered that I was justified in stating here under oath that the matter involved was one of

a visit of courtesy, because I had not been requested by the Supreme High Command of the Army to call. And this answers the second question too. Now comes the final question: "Did you repair directly to the Supreme High Command of the Army for the purpose of bringing about a conference?" In this connection I can only state that I did not repair directly to that body. But it is a fact that on two occasions when I happened to meet two gentlemen on a purely social basis, the first time, Colonel v. Haeften, and the second time, General Hoffmann, with whom I was dining, it was stated merely by way of conversation that it would be a good thing if the Supreme High Command of the Army could obtain a statement from me with regard to the United States. In return, I stated that I would be very glad to do this; that I would be very glad if the Supreme High Command of the Army would care to see me, because I considered it important to make a statement in person with regard to the United States; and in this connection, I might call attention to the fact that this occurred during that period in which I was not received by the Emperor and did not know when this interview would take place. I again met Colonel v. Haeften, and he said: "Yes, we shall come to the point of having an interview"; but I never got the invitation. At that time, because these, according to my opinion, were purely personal questions, I did not consider it necessary to refer to these personal matters here, since I had never received this invitation to visit the Supreme High Command of the Army. For this reason it was that I considered myself fully justified in saying that my visit was a visit of courtesy.

The CHAIRMAN: There is probably nothing more to be said on the point.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Question 7: "Were Major General Bartenwerfer and Colonel v. Haeften, *et al*, present at the time of your interview on the 4th of May?"

To this question I can simply reply that there was nobody there except we two; there were but two of us present.

Then comes the 8th question: "Did you know: (a) that other reports than yours reached the Foreign Office?"

As a matter of fact, I was ignorant of this up to the present time. I have heard now, and I have already suspected, that private reports were written, as always is the case. But whether "reports," what we are to understand by the term "report," reached the Foreign Office, is a matter of which I am still in ignorance today.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, as you know, there are other fairly independent representatives with power to function, who have definite offices to fill, such as military attachés and persons who are granted full powers to act—in the United States, there was no military representative with full powers, but probably only in Russia—consuls general, whose offices are not at the same place as the seat of the Embassy. Are such persons authorized to send independent reports in to the Foreign Office?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: I assume that the term "reports" has the definite meaning here of "political reports"; for the commercial reports of the consuls general are, of course, drawn up independently. There is, however, a regulation in the Foreign Office that such reports which involve matters of general interest must be submitted to the Ambassador or to the Minister. During the time when I was in the United States, I probably now and then saw official reports which were politically opposed to the view which I took, but on such occasions I had conferences with the writers. I do not believe, however, that there was any subject of a political nature *par excellence*, which was made the occasion of study in these reports. Private reports are supposed to have been written; I have not seen them.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the representative of the Foreign Office know whether such reports are to be found in the records, particularly the private reports?

Consul v. BÜLOW: Which expressed to the Foreign Office a definite view opposing those held by Count v. Bernstorff?

The CHAIRMAN: And which were drawn up without the knowledge of Count Bernstorff.

Consul v. BÜLOW: For the moment, I am unable to give any information on that point. I believe that, generally speaking, the reports of the Consulate General in New York were sent in the form of copies to the Embassy in Washington.

Expert DR. BONN: Is the representative of the Foreign Office aware of the fact of any correspondence covering political subjects passing between the Consul General in New York and a gentleman in the Foreign Office?

Consul v. BÜLOW: Such correspondence, a private correspondence, certainly took place. But so far as I have understood Count v. Bernstorff, he referred solely to such reports as dealt with political matters—real reports which passed from one authority to another.

Expert DR. BONN: No, I understood Count Bernstorff differently. But it is immaterial. In any case, the fact is known.

(Consul v. BÜLOW: Yes!)

To whom were they addressed?

Consul v. BÜLOW: There are letters in the records from the then representative of the Consul General in New York to Privy Councilor Grunewald in the Foreign Office.

Expert DR. BONN: These letters were so drawn up, since they have been included in the record, as not to constitute letters of a purely private character, but such as involve the consideration of political subjects?

Consul v. BÜLOW: I assume that Privy Councilor Grunewald was of the opinion that what was in these letters might be of interest, and that for that reason he submitted the copies of these letters to the proper political authorities. It was in this way that these letters—they are letters, are they not?—came to be part of the records.

Expert DR. BONN: Was there an exchange of letters between the Consul General himself and Secretary of State or Under-Secretary of State Zimmermann?

Consul v. BÜLOW: I believe not.

Expert DR. BONN: Who is it that passes upon the point as to whether a report of a consul general is of political significance or not?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: He himself, yes.

Expert DR. BONN: So that there is no guarantee that a report which is looked upon as being of a purely commercial character, and which for this reason is not sent to the Embassy, may not, after all, be political in character. This is of all the greater importance in a country like the United States, where politics and business are so closely allied. I believe that I recollect, as the result of my knowledge of the records, that a large number of reports from the Consul General in New York were not only sent over, but were submitted to you in the form of copies. We are not considering the question of whether reports went over of which you had no knowledge—that is a different question—but whether, in the reports which were sent to you and which it is to be assumed from your statements had to do with political questions as the result of the mere fact of having been sent to you, expressed political views with regard to the situation which were not in accordance with your own.

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: In the reports which went through me, there were often differences of opinion so far as the Embassy was concerned, and, most of all, differences of opinion with regard to the business activities of Privy Councilor Albert, the activities in the field of propaganda of Mr. Dernburg, and the activities of military and naval attachés. I do not remember at the moment that there were differences with regard to political view-points. I do not believe that I had occasion to oppose such views over there. It is true that I already knew, when still in the United States, that the Consul General entertained a different opinion from my own with regard to the chief question of all, the attitude of the United States in the case of the U-boat war; for, up to the very last, he was of the opinion that under no circumstances would the Americans go to war with us.

The CHAIRMAN: Was this stated in those reports?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: I do not remember that I read it in the reports.

Delegate MRS. SCHUCH: Your Excellency referred to the activities of the military and the naval attachés in New York. That was the case during the first hearings. Is it possible that special political reports were sent to Berlin by these officials? If my memory is correct, it was plainly brought out at the first hearings that the policy of the military and naval attachés was opposed to that of Count v. Bernstorff.

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: I believe that the gentlemen indulged

in no political activities. I have no occasion to assume that the gentlemen wrote political reports. Those which had any bearing whatsoever on politics were read by me. I do not believe that there was a difference of opinion in matters of policy in this respect.

The CHAIRMAN: It is probable that we shall take up these questions once more in taking the testimony of his Excellency Dernburg, Consul General Hossenfelder, and Privy Councilor Albert, with regard to this matter. We shall have to reach a conclusion upon the point. I believe that we can drop this question at this time. This probably answers the inquiry put.

(b) Were you informed as to whether the Foreign Office gave credence to these reports? This is a question which your Excellency can probably not answer.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can not state to what extent this was the case. Mr. Secretary of State Zimmermann has testified here that he gave no credence to the same. I am in no position to judge.

Expert DR. BONN: But the situation was very different in General Ludendorff's case. He stated in so many words, in the course of his hearing: "I heard that the consulates general did not share Count Bernstorff's opinion."

The CHAIRMAN: That has already been proved, that the Consul General, even on his trip to Europe, expressed the view that the breaking off of diplomatic relations would come about but that it would not lead to war.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I do not believe that he expressed this view to me; it was expressed to me, however, by other gentlemen of the Embassy. One of the gentlemen of the Embassy went to New York a week before relations were broken off, on a mission for me, to take up the matter of the destruction of the German steamers with the Consul General. In the course of these conferences, the Consul General said that it was absolutely unnecessary to destroy the ships, for nothing would happen, except that relations would be broken off; that it was absolutely out of the question that the Americans would declare war upon us; that before they did this, the Americans would expel Wilson from the Presidency.

The CHAIRMAN: Then the further question is put: (c) Were those who drew up these reports private persons or officials? Can your Excellency tell us anything about this?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can simply repeat that I was informed here in Germany for the first time of the existence of such private letters. Besides this, I was told in Germany that the so-called German-American Chamber of Commerce in New York had written reports to the same effect as those which were just mentioned, that is, which took it for granted that the United States would, under no circumstances, declare war upon us. I have not seen these reports, I do not know whether they are to be found in the records; but I was told here that such reports exist.

The CHAIRMAN: Can the representative of the Foreign Office, perhaps, give us any information on the point?

Consul v. BÜLOW: Reports of this kind, at least reports coming from some kind of a chamber of commerce, are, so far as I know, to be found in the records. I should not like, however, to be absolutely certain of the title "chamber of commerce"; it might have been some other kind of an association.

Expert DR. BONN: Do you know that a letter from a German business man, dealing with American conditions and with the attitude of the Embassy in the United States, reached Germany and was printed here? Have you ever seen this report?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I regret to state that I do know it. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: That was a certain Mr. Koch, to my knowledge.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I could give no details of the matter, under oath, because I do not know how it happened. When I returned from the United States, I came across this obvious forgery almost everywhere over here; for this letter was published in Germany as a special reprint from the New York *Herald* of October 16, 1916. But this letter had never been published in the New York *Herald*, and to that extent was therefore, a decided forgery. I have heard that the letter was written by a chief clerk of a certain German firm, a Mr. Koch, if I am not mistaken, to Mr. Lohmann. In any event, it had come into Mr. Lohmann's hands. I do not know how it came to be published. It contained very sharp attacks against all the gentlemen of the Embassy, attacks against all the gentlemen who had been in America at all, with the exception of Mr. Hossenfelder. Under-Secretary of State Albert and Captain Boy-Ed, especially, intended to take the matter to the courts. I believe that Captain Boy-Ed withdrew from the matter later on; but Under-Secretary of State Albert stayed with it. Legal proceedings never took place, for the reason that Koch never came to Germany. I believe that he is still in the United States.

The CHAIRMAN: Does your Excellency know whether this letter also was reprinted and sent to a considerable number of Delegates?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: So far as I know, it was published broadcast by the thousand. I do not know exactly; I simply know that when I returned, this letter was in everybody's mouth.

The CHAIRMAN: That ends this matter, too, for the present. Did you take any steps to restrain the sending in of reports by officials under your control, expressing different views? For, as you know, the rule was that reports which contained references to political views and subjects were to be submitted to you.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: If there was a difference in the point of view of the reports, then it necessarily followed that I made some addition

thereto or wrote my own report. But if there were any striking cases of differences of opinion with regard to political matters, I do not know of them. As a matter of fact, all the gentlemen of the Embassy remained up to the last moment of the same opinion as myself. The sole exception was the Vice Consul General. For the rest, no difference of opinion ever came up with regard to political matters. Now and again, differences of opinion occurred with regard to commercial questions. They were simply sent to Berlin, accompanied by reports dealing with both sides of the question.

The CHAIRMAN: Consul General Hossenfelder is, it appears, not here?

Consul v. BÜLOW: I wrote to his office this morning and asked him to appear if possible. I must assume that the letter did not reach him.

The CHAIRMAN: You did not call him up by telephone?

Consul v. BÜLOW: I could not talk with him by telephone, because he has no telephone in his house.

The CHAIRMAN: Then we have come to the end of our hearing for today. We ought to reach a conclusion as to what we are going to do in respect to our next session. But it would probably be better for us to do this in private conference.

I therefore close the present session.

The session was closed at 12:15 o'clock.

SUPPLEMENTS

TO THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES OF THE
PUBLIC HEARINGS OF THE SECOND SUBCOM-
MITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

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4	Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Gerard	Berlin May 4	German Government has issued instructions to German war craft to observe the general principles of international law. Hope that these instructions will effect a restoration of the freedom of the seas. United States will demand that Great Britain observe these principles of international law, recognized before the war	972
5	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington May 4	Appeals for peace, impress President Wilson. Continuance of U-boat war means eventual break	973
6	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington May 4	Advises that he has been informed that Germany is willing to accept peace mediation by President Wilson through Colonel House. Peace could best be brought about by cessation of submarine warfare . . .	974
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¹ This Digest does not form a part of the original German text but has been incorporated in this translation for the convenience of the reader.

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16	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Sept. 2	Hope for peace lessened by entrance of Roumania into war. Would Belgium's restoration effect a peace mediation? Failure would cause unrestricted U-boat warfare.	983
17	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington	Peace activities postponed because of Roumania's entrance into the war. President Wilson will probably come forward with peace mediation after reelection, which is likely.	983
18	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Sept. 8	Restoration of Belgium of big interest in the United States. Mediator action by President Wilson likely before the end of the year provided he is reelected. Peace unobtainable through unrestricted U-boat warfare.	984

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19	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	1916 Berlin Sept. 25	Conditions at the front and operations against Roumania. Aid that unrestricted U-boat warfare would give to German troops on the Somme front. Effect that a peace mediation by President Wilson would have. Effort of England to improve her military and commercial situation through the neutral Powers. Postponement in negotiations would make the military situation of Germany worse. Peace move by the President would receive serious consideration by Germany and help President Wilson's election campaign.	984
20	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Oct. 5	President Wilson willing to undertake mediation only if he is re-elected. Ambassador advises to put off unrestricted U-boat warfare until after election.	986
21	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Oct. 9	His Majesty the Emperor desires that the enclosed <i>aide-memoire</i> be handed to Ambassador Gerard in the strictest confidence. He expresses the hope that the Ambassador be reminded of peace moves promised by the President and the increasing ruthlessness of the opponents. German Government has no information as to President Wilson's offer to bring about peace. War has taken such an aspect that Germany will be forced to regain its freedom of action.	986
22	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington	Conversation with President on Polish relief action. Wilson bases his reelection on the fact that he kept the United States out of the war and has ended attacks on American lives. His desire to remain neutral and to bring the war to an end. Entrance of the United States would end opportunity to terminate the war.	987
23	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Bernstorff	Berlin Oct. 14	Polish relief difficulties attributable to England. Continuation of U-boat war on American coast not contemplated. Demands for unrestricted U-boat warfare increasing in Germany. Spontaneous appeal for peace by Wilson acceptable. ...	989

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24	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	1916 Washington Oct. 16	In the course of an interview, President Wilson intimated to the German Ambassador that the carrying on of the U-boat war along the American coast would excite public opinion with regard to the election and that it was his desire to keep the United States out of the war..	989
25	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Oct. 20	President Wilson is not expected to take any action with regard to peace until after the election, nor take up any joint peace move with the Pope or the King of Spain. His chances of reelection are good and he will probably bring about peace mediation shortly thereafter	990
26	Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Nov. 8	German Government asks what the attitude will be toward the U-boat war after the election.....	990
27	Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Nov. 14	Requests of the German Ambassador his view of settling the case of the <i>Marina</i> , which was torpedoed by a U-boat.....	991
28	Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Nov. 16	German Government wishes to know what steps President Wilson is going to take in regard to peace mediation, and when. Also the situation in Mexico.....	991
29	Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Nov. 20	German Government favorably inclined to peace suggestions of President Wilson.....	991
30	Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Nov. 22	German Government announces its willingness to enter peace negotiations.....	992
31	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Nov. 17	Advises that debated question of armed merchant ships not be reopened and that restitution be made in the case of the <i>Marina</i> ...	992
32	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington	Advises that there be no change in submarine warfare program until peace mediation is begun.....	993

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33	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	1916 Washington Nov. 21	President Wilson, through Colonel House, declares that he will take steps toward mediation as soon as possible, his condition being that the U-boat war be carried on in conformity with promises and that no new controversies arise. The President fears that England might reject peace proposals. Mexican situation unchanged and of no interest. The cases of the <i>Marina</i> and the <i>Arabia</i> should be settled to expedite mediation.	993
34	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Nov. 26	Advises the German Ambassador of the particulars of the case of the <i>Marina</i> and asks for American findings in the case. Requests early mediation by President Wilson as delay means further military preparations.	994
35	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Dec. 1	German Navy asks for a revision of the American memorandum with regard to armed merchant ships and asks that Colonel House have his attention called to the incident of the steamer <i>Mississippi</i> and Lord Crewe's speech in the House of Lords relative thereto.	996
36	Foreign Office to the German Embassy at Washington	Berlin Dec. 1	Contains French instructions to captains of merchant vessels to furnish evidence of aggressive purpose of armed merchantmen of Allied Powers.	996
37	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Dec. 1	States that the <i>Marina</i> and <i>Arabia</i> cases have been taken up with Secretary of State Lansing. Question of Belgian deportations causing American protests and hindering peace moves. Federal Reserve Bank exerting pressure against Allies with regard to unsecured obligations.	997
38	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Dec. 4	Reports that everything is ready for peace move and that concessions with regard to Belgian question would hasten it. Peace demand in Congress will probably bring about definite decision.	997

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39	Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	1916 Berlin Dec. 9	The fall of Bucharest creates a favorable opportunity to offer a peace proposal. This will be made through the United States, Switzerland and Spain. American chargé in an interview stated that the President was desirous of bringing about an early peace. The Imperial Chancellor answered that Germany was ready and willing to cooperate.....	998
40	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to American Chargé d'Affaires Grew	Berlin Dec. 12	Germany declares that she is ready to enter into peace negotiations with the Allied Powers and wishes to cooperate with the President to that end.....	999
41	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to the American Chargé d'Affaires, the Swiss Minister, and the Spanish Ambassador	Berlin Dec. 12	Germany formally offers to enter peace negotiations and requests the United States, Switzerland and Spain to communicate their desire to the Allied Powers.....	1000
42	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Dec. 16	Reports that Secretary of State Lansing, by order of President Wilson, has forwarded the note of peace proposal to the Entente Allies without any accompanying note of the United States. Opinion is that Allies will take part in a conference	1001
43	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Dec. 13	There is indication that President Wilson will support peace proposals. Mr. Gerard, in a speech, declared that Germany had practically won the war.....	1001
44	American Chargé d'Affaires Grew to Secretary of State Zimmermann	Berlin Dec. 21	The President of the United States, through American Chargé d'Affaires, asks the Government of Germany to present its views upon how the war might be concluded and the arrangements it would deem satisfactory against a renewal of the conflict.....	1002

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46	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Dec. 26	German Government favors the direct exchange of views at a gathering of delegates from belligerent States at a neutral spot. Does not wish a conference with neutral Powers present.....	1005
47	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Gerard	Berlin Dec. 26	Germany accepts the President's appeal for peace and suggests a direct exchange of ideas with the belligerent States at a neutral place. Also willing to cooperate with the United States in the work of preventing future wars.....	1006
48	Answer of the Entente to the Central Powers regarding the peace proposal	Paris Dec. 30	Rejection by Allied Powers of the peace proposal and the acknowledgment of the principle of nationalities and free existence of small States and guarantees for the security of the world as peace conditions. Condition of Belgium....	1006
49	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg	Washington Oct. 17	Report of rumor that Ambassador Gerard was bringing to the United States a peace proposal. A denial of this with the information that he was coming to announce the launching of unrestricted U-boat warfare caused more trouble. Things are quiet on the eve of the election and it seems that Wilson's chances for reelection are good.....	1009
50	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg	Washington Dec. 29	Advises that in the President's opinion a peace conference could not be arranged due to the insistence of the Allied Powers on certain conditions. Colonel House and President Wilson invite Germany to take part in confidential negotiations with them. The President is primarily interested in "guarantees for the future.".....	1010

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52	Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Jan. 5	Requests German Ambassador to interview Secretary Lansing with regard to submarine warfare on armed merchant ships.....	1012
53	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Jan. 7	Informs Ambassador that Germany is not in favor of intervention of United States in peace negotiations but favors a conference of belligerents and a general conference thereafter to arrange other guarantees advanced by the President. Germany's peace demands moderate. Requests information as to what pressure the President would bring to bear upon the Allies to accept the peace moves.....	1012
54	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Jan. 9	Requests postponement of action until answer is received.....	1014
55	Answer of the Entente to the Government of the United States with reference to Wilson's note of Dec. 18, 1916	Paris Jan. 12	Acknowledgment of President Wilson's note, statement of wilful aggression of Germany, their violations, etc. Allied intentions and objects in continuing the war.....	1014
56	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Jan. 10	Announces delivery of memorandum to Secretary Lansing and that action taken in line with the memorandum will result in break with the United States.....	1017
57	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Jan. 16	Germany announces that she will institute unrestricted submarine warfare beginning February 1. Warning to America with regard to this decision.....	1017
58	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Jan. 18	Asks for suggestion for representation in case of break.....	1020
59	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Jan. 16	Advises that intentions of the President are still all for peace. He will probably bring this subject before Congress. Opposition to Wilson's plans and attacks upon him.....	1020

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61	Message of President Wilson to the Senate, delivered to Secretary of State Zimmermann by American Ambassador Gerard	Washington Jan. 22	Peace must be followed by some definite concert of power which will make future war impossible. It must be between equals, that is there must be no victory. Self-determination of the governed. Every nation should be assured access to the highways of the sea. There should be freedom of the seas. A limitation of naval and military armament.....	1021
62	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington	Suggests Switzerland as German representative in case of American break. Possible that President Wilson will merely break off relations and not declare war.....	1027
63	Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Jan. 26	Advises that Switzerland is satisfactory as representative. Germany finds it impossible to assist in the President's plan as the English war of starvation forces her to continue the conflict.....	1027
64	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Jan. 26	Advising German Ambassador that communication of note authorizing the sinking of all shipping in restricted area beginning February 1, will be made to the American Government on January 31.....	1028
65	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg	1916 Washington Dec. 11	Report on opinions and attitude of the American press.....	1029
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68	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Jan. 26	Requests postponement of unrestricted U-boat war.....	1046
69	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Jan. 27	Reports that President Wilson is of the opinion that Germany should make public her peace conditions. He was convinced that he could effect a peace conference. The beginning of unrestricted U-boat war would surely bring about war with the United States.....	1047
70	Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Jan. 29	States that postponement is impracticable.....	1048
71	Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Jan. 29	Advice to Ambassador concerning telegrams.....	1048
72	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff	Berlin Jan. 29	German Government acknowledges the communication of the President. Public disclosure of peace conditions is impossible because of severity of Entente conditions. Conditions upon which peace would have been made had Allies accepted previous peace proposals. Also contains announcement of the beginning of unrestricted U-boat warfare.....	1048
73	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Jan. 26	Reports President Wilson's proposal of peace mediation without territorial peace conditions. Commencement of U-boat war would make break unavoidable.....	1050
74	Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office	Washington Jan. 14	General report of conditions and opinions in America. Attacks upon President Wilson and his peace moves. Efforts to discredit the German Embassy.....	1051

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77	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Pless Nov. 4	Concerning the "mobilization of the German people" and the time to institute it. Notice to be given to other allies of the Central Powers.	1058
78	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg	Berlin Nov. 4	Statement of peace conditions.....	1059
79	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Pless Nov. 5	Advising his agreement with the fundamental conceptions of the peace conditions.....	1061
80	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau	Berlin Nov. 6	Agreement with detailed addenda made by Counselor of the Legation. Inexpediency of including war indemnity from Belgium.....	1062
81	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Pless Nov. 7	Advising communication of peace conditions to Vienna in general form. Question of war indemnity from Belgium.....	1063
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85	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Wedel	Berlin Nov. 23	Encloses statement of German and Austro-Hungarian war aims.....	1065
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87	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Pless Dec. 5	Advises that peace proposal be sent as soon as possible after fall of Bucharest.....	1070
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89	Interview of General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg with the Emperor		Status of military situation is a factor in the submission of peace proposal.....	1071
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92	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann- Hollweg to Ambassador Count Wedel	Berlin Dec. 15	Discussion of possible conditions the Entente will ask in reference to peace proposal.....	1075
93	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau	Berlin Dec. 15	Advises caution in giving to press re- ports of Emperor's speeches.....	1075
94	Counselor of Lega- tion v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Karlsruhe Dec. 16	Reply to No. 93 and placing juris- diction with War Press Office.....	1076
95	Reproduction of Wolff Telegram to the <i>Basler Nachrichten</i>	Berlin Dec. 16	Text of Emperor's speech at Mül- hausen.....	1077
96	Minister Romberg to the Foreign Office	Berne Dec. 17	Advising of effect of Emperor's speech in Switzerland.....	1077
97	Secretary of State Zimmermann to the Legations at Berne, The Ha- gue, Copenha- gen, Christiania and Stockholm	Berlin Dec. 18	Advises to call attention of press to expressions of the Imperial Chan- celor to overcome the possible misrepresentations of the Em- peror's speech.....	1078
98	Minister Rosen to the Foreign Office	The Hague Dec. 20	Report on effect of Emperor's speech in Holland.....	1078

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100	Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office	Vienna Dec. 18	Acknowledges receipt of No. 92 and states that answer to Allies should not be drawn to weaken position. Communications of the Pope in No. 99 are of little value.....	1079
101	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Secretary of Legation v. Lersner	Berlin Dec. 19	Discussion of possible conditions of Allies in regard to peace proposal. Disadvantage of armistice.....	1080
102	Minister Count Brockdorff-Rantzau to the Foreign Office	Copenhagen Dec. 18	Advises that the Emperor's speech and the peace proposal of the Central Powers was receiving serious attention in England, which information was obtained from the American Minister.....	1080
103	Minister Count Brockdorff-Rantzau to the Foreign Office	Copenhagen Dec. 19	Report of interview with Ambassador Gerard concerning peace proposal.	1081
104	Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office	Vienna Dec. 21	Encloses report of interview of Austro-Hungarian Minister in Copenhagen with Ambassador Gerard on peace proposal.....	1083
105	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Wedel	Berlin Dec. 23	Discussion of proposed answer to President Wilson's note, advocating a meeting of the delegates of the belligerent States.....	1085
106	Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office	Pless Dec. 23	Reports that the armies are in favor of the peace proposal but expect a rejection thereof. Willingness to continue the war is expressed by the men.	1086
107	Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office	Pless Dec. 24	Reports that General v. Hindenburg advises an armistice on land only.	1087
108	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Secretary of Legation v. Lersner	Berlin Dec. 24	Encloses note of reply to President Wilson which announces that the Central Powers will negotiate directly with the Entente.....	1087

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109	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Wedel	1916 Berlin Dec. 25	Advises that German Ambassador in Washington reports that President Wilson expects frank statements from the belligerents in regard to peace conditions; and that Austrian note to America should bring out that Central Powers wish to deal directly with their opponents.	1088
110	Secretary of State v. Lersner to the Foreign Office	Pless Dec. 25	Informs the Greek King that the war will be continued.....	1089
111	Secretary of State Zimmermann to the Emperor	Dec. 26	Advises that answer to peace note of President Wilson has been delivered to Ambassador Gerard.....	1089
112	Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office	Vienna Dec. 26	Reports that participation of the United States or any other neutral in peace negotiations is not desired in Austria.....	1089
113	Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office	1917 Vienna Jan. 1	Advises that Count Czernin concurs in the note of response.....	1090
114	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to the Emperor	Berlin Jan. 2	Announces that note of the Entente endeavors to place blame for the continuance of the war upon the Central Powers by stating that peace proposal is not made in good faith. A note to neutral Powers is under consideration.....	1090
115	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Pless Jan. 2	Necessary to revise war aims in view of the rejection of the Entente.....	1091
116	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Pless Jan. 2	Report of Austria on Entente note. Advises that he is in full concurrence with the action of the government in regard to the Entente's rejection of the peace proposal. Also contains Austrian Army order regarding Entente's rejection.....	1091
117	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Pless Jan. 4	Reply to Emperor Karl agreeing that responsibility for the continuation of the war rests with the Entente and that the reply to their note will not be addressed to them but to neutral Powers. Changes in Army orders.....	1093

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119	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to the Chief of the General Staff General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg	1917 Berlin Jan. 4	Reply to No. 118.....	1095
120	Conference of: Count Czernin, Ambassador Prince Hohenlohe, the Imperial Chancellor, Secretary of State Zimmermann, Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm	Berlin Jan. 6	Discussion of answer to Entente note.....	1097
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122	Note of the German Government to the neutral Powers	Berlin Jan. 10	Answer to the Entente note sent through the neutral Powers.....	1100
123	Minister v. d. Lancken to the Foreign Office	Brussels Jan. 11	Reports that Director Kellog of the Relief Commission states that deportation of workmen from Belgium has aroused great feeling in America and done much to injure relations.....	1103
124	Proclamation of William I	Berlin Jan. 12	Statement to German people of rejection of peace proposal. Congratulates people on their steadfastness.....	1103
125	Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office	Pless Jan. 15	Reports that congratulations have been received in great numbers since the proclamation of His Majesty.....	1104

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127	Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office	Pless Jan. 14	Asks for explanation concerning Wilson's peace mediation in the above note No. 126.....	1105
128	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Secretary of Legation v. Lersner	Berlin Jan. 15	Reply to No. 127.....	1105
129	Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office	Pless Jan. 16	Reply to No. 128. States that matters will not be changed to avoid a break with the United States....	1106
130	Extract from a Report of Colonel Renner, Military Attaché at The Hague	The Hague Jan. 18	Discussion of supplementary remarks of Balfour to the reply of the Entente to Wilson.....	1106
131	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Chief of the Admiralty Staff Admiral v. Holtzendorff	Berlin Jan. 22	Enclosing answer of German Ambassador concerning instruction in U-boat question.....	1108
132	Chief of the Admiralty Staff Admiral v. Holtzendorff to Captain v. Bülow	Berlin Jan. 23	Expression of opinion of Admiralty Staff regarding U-boat orders.....	1108
133	Captain v. Bülow to the Admiralty Staff	Berlin Jan. 23	Chief of Staff is in agreement with views of his Excellency in No. 132.	1109
134	Chief of the Admiralty Staff v. Holtzendorff to Secretary of State Zimmermann	Berlin Jan. 24	Discussion of instructions concerning U-boat war sent to Count Bernstorff.....	1109

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136	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau	Berlin Jan. 24	Reports that copy of No. 135 has been sent to Admiralty Staff.....	1111
137	Secretary of State Zimmermann to the Chief of the Admiralty Staff	Berlin Jan. 25	Reports that German Ambassador in Washington advises that period of grace in favor of neutral shipping will cause break but not war.	1112
138	Secretary of State Zimmermann to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau	Berlin Jan. 25	Similar to No. 137.....	1112
139	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Pless Jan. 25	Reports that U-boat instructions had been taken up with the Supreme High Command of the Army. Little chance to change orders as U-boats had already left with their instructions.....	1112
140	Chief of the Admiralty Staff to Secretary of State Zimmermann	Berlin Jan. 25	Announces that extension of period of grace to neutral Powers is out of the question.....	1113
141	Captain v. Bülow to the Admiralty Staff	Berlin Jan. 25	Informed General Ludendorff that Admiralty Staff has rejected proposals of the Foreign Office on ground that U-boats had already left.....	1114
142	Chief of the Admiralty Staff to the Foreign Office	Berlin Jan. 28	Requests that American Government be informed that U-boat war shall be continued until the Entente shall have recognized principles of international law in conduct of war upon the sea.....	1114
143	Secretary Zimmermann to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau	Berlin Jan. 28	Reports that German Ambassador in America requests postponement. Proposed answer thereto...	1115
144	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Pless Jan. 28	Emperor and Supreme High Command in agreement on proposed answer..	1115

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146	Chief of the Admiralty Staff Admiral v. Holtzendorff to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg	Berlin Jan. 7	Same subject.....	1117
147	Secretary of State of the Imperial Marine Service v. Tirpitz to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg	Berlin Jan. 13	Enclosing memorial to his Excellency giving a general survey of the unrestricted U-boat war and probable future effect.....	1122
148	Chief of the General Staff General v. Falkenhayn to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg	General Headquarters Jan. 13	Opinion with regard to the Belgian and the U-boat questions.....	1128
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150	Personal letter of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Secretary of State v. Jagow	Charleville Mar. 5	Advises a speedy conclusion of the war because of declining powers of resistance. U-boat warfare the means to that end. Further discussion of probable effects on England and neutral Powers. Censorship for U-boat articles.....	1139
151	Memorial of Ambassador Count Bernstorff to Secretary of State Lansing	Washington Mar. 8	Statement concerning the situation confronting Germany, regarding English blockade and U-boat war.	1143

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152	Communication of the Imperial Chancellor to the Press	1916 Berlin Mar. 13	Statement of conditions at the front. Also contains discussion of probable effects of U-boat war on England and neutral countries.	1146
153	Minister v. Treutler to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg	General Headquarters Mar. 15	Reports conference on carrying out the U-boat war.	1150
154	Dr. Kaempf, president of the Reichstag, to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg	Berlin Apr. 6	Reichstag advocates the institution of U-boat war.	1150
155	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Chief of the General Staff General v. Falkenhayn	General Headquarters May 3	Advises that U-boat war of present extent can not bring about defeat of England and that an increase of U-boats would only prolong war as it would draw the United States into it.	1151
156	Chief of the General Staff General v. Falkenhayn to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg	General Headquarters May 4	States that unrestricted U-boat war is only weapon which will bring about the defeat of England.	1151
157	Conferences with the Imperial Chancellor, Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and General Ludendorff	Aug. 29 and 30	U-boat war sole means of retaliation against English blockade. Objections to this mode of warfare; effect upon the United States and other neutrals.	1152
158	Conference with regard to the adoption of the unrestricted U-boat war	Pless Aug. 31	Discussion of adoption of unrestricted U-boat war and its possible results and effects.	1154
159	Capt. v. Bülow to Chief of the Admiralty Staff Admiral v. Holtzendorff	Pless Sept. 10	Advises that General Ludendorff believes that U-boat war will be successful but only when military position is secure. He sees peril in Denmark.	1163

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162	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau	Berlin Oct. 1	Advises that information from Headquarters states that U-boat war will be begun on October 18. Probable results thereof.....	1168
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164	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg	Pless Oct. 2	States that there was a misunderstanding regarding No. 162. Expresses hope that there will be complete harmony and cooperation on all matters.....	1170
165	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Oct. 5	His Majesty states that U-boat war will not be launched at the present time.....	1171
166	Chief of the General Staff Marshal v. Hindenburg to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg	Pless Oct. 5	Requests information as to responsibility of the Supreme High Command as regards U-boat war.....	1172
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169	Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau	Berlin Oct. 8	Advising of announcement to Reichstag favoring obstruction of English imports but not an unrestricted U-boat war.....	1180
170	Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office	Pless Dec. 1	Reports that the Field Marshal stated that unrestricted U-boat war would be started soon.....	1181
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NUMBER 1

PART I.—DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN BERLIN AND WASHINGTON, APRIL 11, 1916, TO FEBRUARY 15, 1917

I

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, April 11, 1916.

Telegram No. 3.

WASHINGTON.

House paints the feeling resulting from the *Sussex* case in very dark colors. Situation is looked upon in the White House as beyond hope, because the opinion is entertained that the German Government in spite of withdrawal of Tirpitz can not curb the U-boat war even with the best will in the world. That up to the present time it has been merely the result of a lucky chance that no American has perished, and that any moment may bring a crisis such as will result in the breach. That the American Government is convinced that *Sussex* was torpedoed by a German U-boat. Repetition of such *contretemps* would necessarily force the United States into war against us, to the very great regret of Wilson, as, according to my information, he would like to bring about peace within a few months. That if the United States were to be drawn into the war, every opportunity for an early peace would be lost. Kindly send me instructions on the basis of which I can reassure this Government, which now once more is entertaining doubts of our good faith.

BERNSTORFF.

2

Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 1.

Re No. 3.

BERLIN, April 11, 1916.

To be communicated in confidence to Colonel House, not for the press.

If President Wilson is desirous of peace his wishes are in full accord with the desires of Germany, which entertains the hope that German-American relations can be so moulded as to make possible cooperation in the bringing about of peace.

V. JAGOW.

3

*Ambassador Gerard to Secretary of State v. Jagow*¹

BERLIN, April 20, 1916.

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

. . . If it is still the purpose of the Imperial Government to make further war without mercy or discrimination upon merchant ships by means of submarines and in disregard of what the United States must consider the sacred and incontestable rules of conduct of international law and the generally recognized precepts of humanity, the Government of the United States will in such case finally find itself forced to the conclusion that there is but one road which it can take. Unless the Imperial Government will at once announce and put into practical operation the renunciation for the future of the methods employed by the submarines in their war against passenger and freight vessels, the Government of the United States will be left no choice other than to break off completely diplomatic relations with the German Government. The Government of the United States contemplates such a step with the greatest reluctance but considers itself bound to take it for the sake of humanity and the rights of neutral nations.

GERARD.

4

Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Gerard

BERLIN, May 4, 1916.

The undersigned has the honor, in the name of the Imperial German Government, to answer the letter of the 20th of the month of his Excellency the Ambassador of the United States of America, Mr. James W. Gerard, with regard to the conduct of the German U-boat war.

. . . Guided by these considerations, the German Government informs the Government of the United States that instructions have been issued to the German war-craft to observe the general principles of international law covering the question of visit, search, and destruction of merchant ships, and not to sink merchant ships, even inside the restricted war zone, without warning, unless they take to flight or offer resistance, and to observe the care necessary for the preservation of human lives.

In the fight for existence which Germany has been forced to undertake, the neutral Powers can certainly not expect it, having due regard for its own interests, to impose limitations upon the use of an effective weapon,

¹ From the so-called second *Sussex* note.

if its enemies, on their part, are allowed to avail themselves at their pleasure of methods which are in conflict with international law. Such a demand would be inconsistent with the essence of neutrality. The German Government is convinced that the Government of the United States is far from entertaining an expectation of this kind. This is made obvious by repeated assertions on the part of the American Government that its fixed purpose is, as far as all the belligerents are concerned, to restore the crippled freedom of the seas.

The German Government proceeds, accordingly, upon the assumption that its latest instructions to its war craft will, in the opinion of the Government of the United States as well, remove every obstacle which obstructs the carrying into effect of the cooperation suggested in the note of July 23, 1915, the purpose of which was to bring about a restoration of the freedom of the seas even during the existence of the war; and it entertains no doubt that the Government of the United States from now on will most earnestly demand and insist that the Government of Great Britain will immediately undertake a full observance of those principles of international law which were generally recognized as such before the war and which were particularly brought to the attention of the British Government in the notes of the American Government of December 28, 1914, and November 5, 1915. If the steps taken by the Government of the United States should not lead to the desired result of bringing about an observance of the laws of humanity by all the belligerent nations, the German Government would then be brought face to face with a new situation concerning which it would be forced to reserve for itself complete freedom of action. . . .

V. JAGOW.

5

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, May 4, 1916.

Telegram No. 22.

Answer to Nos. 9 and 11, as in
the supplement No. 173.

WASHINGTON.

House told me that Gerard had at his own request been informed as to the minimum demands of this Government. Wilson is being strongly impressed by appeals for peace. Even anti-German ring desires the war to come to an end since, if it does not, financial losses are to be expected. My propositions are based upon the thought that submarine warfare carried on in accordance with the principles of international law would still fail to produce results and that the commencement of peace negotiations are of

more importance. . . . I am afraid that the carrying on of a U-boat war directed against merchantmen would mean no more than putting off a break, since it is certain that new incidents would occur.

BERNSTORFF.

6

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, May 6, 1916.

Telegram No. 26.

WASHINGTON, May 4, 1916.

House informed me that Gerard had telegraphed that we were willing to accept peace mediation by the President and that House's visit to Berlin for this purpose was looked upon with favor. Nothing is known here about the settlement of submarine question. Peace mediation naturally depends on whether the road is clear. This could be brought about most easily by a temporary cessation of the submarine warfare during negotiations.

BERNSTORFF.

7

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 22.

Re No. 26.

BERLIN, May 6, 1916.

For your Excellency's information:

We hope that our note and great concession have finally put an end to the state of distrust and have opened an era of relations of mutual confidence. Public animosity existing on this side against Wilson on account of tone and contents of his note and on account of the impression that he is taking sides against us, is in any event so marked that some action against England openly recognizable as such must be taken before he could be accepted by the German people as an unbiased person submitting his good offices in favor of peace. To this extent, Gerard's telegram premature. In the absence of some such action on Wilson's part, there is danger that animosity toward him will grow and possibility of peace mediation be relegated to remotest future. Of course, in the last analysis adoption of means leading to peace is always welcome, but some action concerning England would seem necessary, in order to manifest a willingness over there to make concessions, if the peace to be brought about is not, when all is said and done, merely a peace which favors England.

If the attempt to bring England to the point of being willing to discuss the subject of peace with us, even quasi-officially, is unsuccessful, then, in view of the fact that England will probably refuse point blank to return to the Declaration of London, the great concession made by us, which commits us, to all intents and purposes, to give up U-boat warfare, will have placed us in a thoroughly untenable position.

A visit from House very welcome at any time. Confirm by wire.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

8

Ambassador Gerard to Secretary of State v. Jagow

BERLIN, May 10, 1916.

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

I have the honor, acting under instructions from my Government, to submit to your Excellency the following answer to your Excellency's note of May 4, 1916:

The note of the Imperial Government of May 4, 1916, has received the careful consideration of the Government of the United States. It has been given all the more consideration because it announces as the future purpose of the Imperial Government "that it will bend every effort, as long as the war lasts, to limit naval operations to the fighting forces of the belligerents," and that the Imperial Government is determined to impose upon all her naval commanders the duty of observing the limitations announced by recognized principles of international law, upon which the Government of the United States has insisted during the course of all the months which have elapsed since the Imperial Government announced on February 4, 1915, that submarine policy from which she has happily withdrawn. The Government of the United States, in the course of its patient endeavors to bring about a friendly exchange of views on the critical questions which resulted from the adoption of that policy, and which so seriously threatened the friendly relations existing between the two countries, has been guided consistently by motives of friendship and has allowed its hand to be stayed for the same reason. The Government of the United States will rely in confidence upon the assumption that the present altered policy of the Imperial Government will, from this time on, be carried out in a conscientious manner, which will avoid the chief danger of a break in the friendly relations which exist between the United States and Germany. The Government of the United States deems it necessary to state that it considers it definitely settled that the Imperial Government has no intention of conveying the impression that the maintenance of the newly-adopted policy depends in any way upon the conduct or result of diplomatic relations between the Govern-

ment of the United States and any other belligerent Power, although certain expressions in the Imperial Government's note of May 4 might possibly be capable of such an interpretation. Therefore to avoid the possibility of a misunderstanding, the Government of the United States informs the Imperial Government that it would not for a moment entertain the thought, much less consider it as a possible subject for discussion, that the observance by German naval authorities of the rights of American citizens on the high seas should in any conceivable manner or in the remotest degree depend upon the attitude of any other Government upon the rights of neutrals and non-combatants. Responsibility in these matters is separate, not joint; absolute, not relative. . . .

GERARD.

9

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, May 24, 1916.

Telegram No. 38.

Answer to telegram No. 26 and with
reference to telegram No. 36.

WASHINGTON, May 18, 1916.

I am now negotiating confidentially and in cooperation with House the settlement of such questions as are still pending, such as the *Lusitania* and Igel cases, in order to be able to present a clean slate. Feeling more favorable here now, on account of the effects of the Irish executions. Wilson believes trouble with us is settled, and hopes for matters to calm down, and for early conclusion of peace. Lansing's remark with regard to British-American treaty obligations refers to Bryan's treaty. His purpose was to indicate that war with England was out of the question and therefore means for exerting pressure were lacking. Expression to be read in connection with the opinion which exists here, already communicated by me, that it would be easier to end the war than to force England to lift the blockade.

Are my dispatches arriving? Hardly any orders being received.

BERNSTORFF.

10

Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 56.

Confidential.

BERLIN, June 7, 1916.

More than a month has passed since the direction of our last note to the United States on the submarine question without President Wilson having

made up his mind to take any action toward the British Government regarding the question of blockade. I do not expect that England would undertake any renunciation of the measures adopted by her in defiance of international law as the result of any influence applied by the United States, and I am equally unready to assume that a rejection of the American requests by England could lead to any real straining of relations between the two countries. The existing arbitration agreement which makes it possible to put off the settlement of the issues of a conflict precludes such a thing. But the complete passivity of Mr. Wilson, which could be understood as long as he desired to avoid the appearance of acting under German pressure but which, dragged on to this extent, can not be justified, necessarily influences public opinion on our side very unfavorably and places the Imperial Government in the most difficult position imaginable.

Doubtless your Excellency has already realized from the news which has arrived over there that our concession in the submarine question with regard to the United States is regarded as impracticable in many broad and influential circles in Germany. Should President Wilson continue his inactive course with regard to England, it is greatly to be feared that even that portion of German public opinion which has up to this time supported the attitude of the Government, will join those who are opposed to the Government's policies, and that the entire public opinion of Germany will insistently demand the resumption of submarine warfare in its earlier forms. The Imperial Government would then be still less in a position to forestall this demand for any length of time because of the fact that all the military authorities regard and recommend, as they did before, unrestricted U-boat warfare as the only really effective war measure which could bring about the complete defeat of England. And, moreover, I must add that, as we have been informed from absolutely confidential sources, the Entente has determined upon a marked severity of blockade measures, and at the same time has decided to reject the protests of the neutral Powers in the future, particularly those of the United States, relying upon the argument that it is only in this way that a termination of the war can be brought about in such a manner as to conform with the interests of the neutral Powers. Your Excellency will therefore call President Wilson's attention through Colonel House to the serious dangers lurking in his attitude of inaction, so far as England is concerned. As regards Mr. Wilson's purpose to bring about a peace by mediation, this is from time to time meeting with the most lively opposition in England. From our point of view it would be very desirable for England to be the one to reject these overtures, for the fact is that we entertain but little hope for the result of the exercise of good offices by one whose instincts are all in favor of the English point of view, and who, in addition to this, is so naive a statesman as President Wilson. And we are impelled to this attitude by the consideration that the President would

from the outset exert himself to bring about a peace based in the main on the *status quo ante*, particularly with regard to Belgium. Difficult as it is to state at this time to what extent we would be in a position to bring about a solution of the Belgian question which would be in accord with our interests (a question which has become a vital one as the result of the war), we can at least say this much today, that if the progress of the war were to continue favorable for us, a peace founded on the absolute *status quo ante* would be unacceptable to us. As the President interprets his rôle, to wit, that of a Lord Protector designated to uphold everything which, in his opinion, constitutes right and justice, there is reason to fear that our refusal to conclude peace on these terms might induce him to go over openly into the camp of our enemies. It is not, however, impossible that public opinion in England might, in the course of time, turn again to Mr. Wilson and his desire to mediate. As soon as Mr. Wilson's mediation plans threaten to assume a more concrete form and an inclination on the part of England to meet him begins to manifest itself, it will be the duty of your Excellency to prevent President Wilson from approaching us with a positive proposal to mediate. The choice of the means to reach this result without endangering our relations with the United States I venture to leave to your Excellency's ability as a diplomat, since I am not able to form a complete estimation of the situation in the United States from here.

V. JAGOW.

II

Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 39.

Strictly confidential.

BERLIN, June 12, 1916.

Both the Army and the Navy are again insisting upon a U-boat war as the only means of fighting England and as being particularly adapted for attacking her blockade, against which President Wilson has as yet undertaken nothing and probably will not undertake anything.

Your judgment in a general way is asked on the following points:

1. Whether after the nomination Wilson would go as far as to break off relations and declare war even if we should spare human lives in connection with our new U-boat war.
2. What attitude would the Republican candidate take with regard to this question?

Mediation by Wilson in the interests of peace finds disfavor with the public of England and would really be unwelcome to us because he is so unpopular.

V. JAGOW.

12

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, June 22, 1916.

Telegram No. 57.

WASHINGTON.

Assuming as a premise that by the commencement of the U-boat war is meant either an official or silent withdrawal from the assurances which we gave in our note of May 4, such a withdrawal or deviation from the concessions made by us would, in my opinion, lead to a break and the entrance of the United States into the war. If Wilson should give in, he would lose every hope of reelection and Hughes, who is already suspected of being a German candidate, could not really suggest any giving in. I am constantly in communication with House with regard to the questions of peace mediation and blockade. The first is to be definitely expected in the course of the summer, from election prospects if for no other reason. It is to be presumed that Wilson will assume the position with our enemies that he will be obliged to take severe measures with regard to the blockade question unless peace is arrived at.

BERNSTORFF.

13

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. Berlin, August 16, 1916.

No. 350.

Answer to Dispatch A-56.

RYE, July 13, 1916.

The inaction of Mr. Wilson, who only entertains the one thought of being reelected, is to be explained in the first place by the fact that no pressure to proceed against England has been brought to bear upon him by public opinion on this side. As is well known, the situation which could serve as a background for such action is lacking here. The American circles which are suffering financially from the English blockade are entirely lost sight of in the face of the monstrous stream of gold which our enemies, without being skimpy as to details, or without shying at the question of graft, have poured out over this country. For the rest, Wilson's general ideas with regard to taking any step in connection with England are about the same as those expressed by your Excellency. The fact is that he does not believe that he would have any success whatsoever because he has no means of exerting pressure. If he threatened England with war, nobody would believe him.

The situation is quite different with regard to the well-known desire of the President to bring peace to Europe. On this point he has at this time

practically the whole of the American public behind him. He is also of the opinion that after the failure of their coming offensive, which is anticipated, our enemies will be ready to take up the question of peace negotiations. If he is mistaken in this assumption, and if our enemies reject an American proposal of this kind, then the chief question referred to in the instructions forwarded to me by your Excellency will have been settled. In the meantime Mr. Wilson will most certainly make the attempt to bring about peace, for election reasons. On this account I should like to request your Excellency most respectfully to instruct me again by means of a short telegram as to how I am to interpret the words "more concrete form of mediation plans" and "positive proposal to mediate." I take it for granted that the most of my dispatches will be placed before your Excellency simultaneously with this one. It is, moreover, true that Mr. Gerard was probably not accurately informed with regard to the President's mediation plans when your Excellency spoke with him concerning the peace mediation in the beginning of May. In any event he has mistaken the stand which your Excellency desires to assume with regard to an American appeal for peace. Basing his belief on a former telegram of Mr. Gerard, Mr. Wilson was of the opinion that the Imperial Government would accept his good offices, but, in accordance with instructions, I have weakened this impression through Mr. House. So far as I know, Mr. Wilson refuses to participate in any way in territorial questions, but is interested only in "disarmament" and "freedom of the seas." He is planning a conference at The Hague, at which the United States and the other neutral Powers will only take part to the extent that the questions above referred to become an issue. The "disarmament" point may, it is true, be very little to our liking, though on the other hand the "freedom of the seas" question would undoubtedly bring us together with the United States. If peace negotiations between the belligerent Powers should once be initiated, I believe that it would be out of the question even if they were unsuccessful—for the United States to go to war against us. The peace feeling over here is too strong. Hysterical excitement, such as was caused by the *Lusitania* case and events connected therewith, would be necessary to bring the Americans to an emotional crisis as the result of which war with us would be inevitable, as it has already seemed from time to time. In the absence of similar occurrences such feeling could no longer be aroused. The admiration which the cruise of the submarine *Deutschland* generally provoked over here shows most plainly which way the wind now blows.

I have submitted the request expressed above because I believe it to be impossible to prevent Mr. Wilson from undertaking a peace move. But I am in doubt as to whether your Excellency, by using the term "positive mediation proposal" does or does not have in mind perhaps such a proposal as Mr. Roosevelt made after the Russo-Japanese war. It is a well-known

fact that on this occasion the negotiations were carried on in an atmosphere of direct American influence. As I have stated, this is not what Wilson wants. He only wants to play the peacemaker; he wants to earn the name of having brought the belligerents to the point of negotiating with one another. In view of the feeling on this side, it is quite presumable that such a result would assure his reelection. I am therefore convinced that the President will make an appeal for peace in the course of a few weeks, provided the futility of the offensive of our enemies shall have manifested itself at that time. Mr. Wilson would then say to the English that he was forced, as a matter of domestic politics, to very definitely oppose the blockade, in case the point of peace negotiations had not been reached. This leaves me with the question of whether it is my duty to attempt to stand in the way of such an appeal. Of course, so far as Mr. House is concerned, I could hold him off with considerable ease, but Wilson would immediately suspect that we were calculating upon his successor and were desirous of giving Mr. Hughes the advantage and honor of the peace move.

So far as I can judge from this point, only three possibilities exist.

1. Assuming that Wilson's peace movement is nullified by the opposition of our enemies. Then in any case the situation would favor us more than before, should we, in order to crush England, renew the submarine warfare.

2. Assuming that the peace movement is brought to naught by our opposition and that we then again take up the submarine warfare.

3. Assuming that the peace movement meets with favor on the part of both belligerents.

In the first case, I believe that war with the United States would be likely to follow; in the second, it would be certain to follow. This is the explanation of my request for definite instructions as to whether I shall block an appeal for peace or only a positive proposal which would bind us with regard to matters of a territorial nature.

BERNSTORFF.

14

Imperial Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff
Telegram No. 260.

Re Report 350 of the 13th instant.

BERLIN, August 18, 1916.

We would be glad to accept mediation by the President with a view to initiate peace negotiations between the belligerents. Kindly encourage the President in his activities along this line. Of course the acceptance of such mediation is not to be considered as binding us to any concrete conditions of peace resulting therefrom. A general peace conference in which the

neutral Powers will participate and which will consider general international questions, questions arising between nation and nation, and questions of the freedom of the seas and disarmament, will be acceptable, if need be, provided it follows peace negotiations between the belligerents which have been successful.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

15

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. Berlin, August 30, 1916.

No. 291.

In connection with report 276

of May 17 last.

WASHINGTON, May 28, 1916.

. . . President Wilson's peace plans are becoming constantly more clear-cut. The only question is whether or not he will have sufficient power to persuade our enemies to enter upon negotiations. Colonel House is convinced that Mr. Wilson will be successful. The President has in mind the calling of a conference at The Hague at which the neutral Powers shall only take such part as is involved in the question of the "freedom of the seas." In case this matter should go through, Colonel House would undoubtedly take part in the conference, although not, perhaps, as the official American representative. Nevertheless his influence should be very great, since nobody else occupies the position of being able to exchange opinions with the President. The latter still holds to the belief that the United States should in no way intervene in the actual conditions of peace. He and his *alter ego* are in the meantime very apprehensive lest our enemies remain stiff-necked, because they are entertaining or seeking to arouse the impression that the President would be acting on Germany's behalf if he were to start his peace movement. In any event, this last idea is continually being thrust into discussion by England. Sometimes it is said that Prince v. Bülow is coming here for the purpose of taking up the German peace conditions in detail with Mr. Wilson; again, that Germany is approaching the point of starvation and for this reason must sue for peace. It devolves upon us to block these endeavors on the part of our enemies as much as possible. It is to be hoped that they will not do too much harm, for the voices raised for peace among the American people are constantly on the increase, and Mr. Wilson can certainly feel sure of his reelection if he brings about a peace conference. For this reason, we shall gain ground here daily, as long as it is made clear that we are ready to meet the American peace move half-way, but that our enemies on the contrary, hold themselves aloof. When all is said and done, the American people are pacif-

ically inclined. It becomes clearer day by day how difficult it is to arouse a feeling for preparedness for war, etc. Whoever has lived here for a long time can not avoid the conviction that the American's aim in life is the peaceful acquisition of wealth. It is only when he believes that a deep injustice has been done him that he allows himself to be carried along in the current of an hysterical war sentiment. And why should the instinct for war be found in the heart of a people whose boundaries are not by any means too narrow and which has never yet seen an enemy within their compass, and, according to all human calculation, will never see one there.

BERNSTORFF.

16

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 74.
Confidential.

BERLIN, September 2, 1916.

Our west front holds fast. The east front is naturally somewhat jeopardized by Roumania's declaration of war. Rolling up of the front or collapse of Austria not to be expected. Turkey and Bulgaria may be relied upon. Greece uncertain. Hope to conclude peace before winter as the exhaustion of Russia or France by the war is lessened by this development. In case no major catastrophe should occur in the east, would peace mediation by Wilson be possible and successful if we were to guarantee Belgium's unconditional restoration? Otherwise the unrestricted U-boat war will have to be carried on in dead earnest. I ask merely for your personal opinion without side references of any kind.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

17

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, September 12, 1916.

Telegram No. 100.

Answering telegram No. 260 of August 18.

Wilson's peace activities have been postponed because at the present moment they would lead to nothing on account of Roumania's entrance into the war and because of the confidence of victory on the part of our enemies resulting therefrom. Wilson believes that he will not be able to accomplish anything more before the election because England is playing

a waiting game, pending the arrival of election day, and if he were not reelected she would give him a cool refusal. But in case Wilson wins the election, the prospects of which are now favorable, and if up to that time there is a lull in military operations, the President will immediately take steps towards mediation. He believes that then he will be strong enough to force a peace conference.

Wilson considers it important to American interests that neither belligerent should win a decisive victory.

BERNSTORFF.

18

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, September 12, 1916.

Telegram No. 101.

Answer to No. 74.

WASHINGTON, *September 8, 1916.*

Question in the main answered by my telegram 100, unless your Excellency intends personally to encourage mediation by Wilson. To the extent that the United States of America will enter into a question of territory—a proposition which up to this time I have always categorically declined—the restoration of Belgium should constitute the chief American interest, because public opinion, almost without exception partakes of this interest. If Wilson is reelected I consider mediatory action by him as very likely to occur before the end of the year.

Considered from this side, the possibility of obtaining peace as the result of an unrestricted U-boat war appears to be hopeless, because the United States would thereby be unquestionably drawn into the war, quite irrespective of the result of the election, and consequently the war would simply be prolonged.

BERNSTORFF.

19

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 90.

Repetition of No. 89.

BERLIN, *September 25, 1916.*

For the personal information of your Excellency:

The purpose of the Entente to break through our front has not succeeded up to the present time, and will not succeed, as is the case with offensive

operations from Saloniki in this direction and in Dobrudja. On the other hand the operations of the Central Powers against Roumania are pursuing a course favorable to us. However, whether or not we shall be able to win such a success as to end the war this year is still a matter of doubt; therefore, and for the present, we must reckon with a continuance of the war. In opposition to this, the Imperial fleet promises that swift success will follow the unrestricted participation of an increased number of U-boats, in view of the commercial situation of England, and will result in making our principal enemy, England, more inclined to consider peace in a few months. For this reason, the Supreme High Command of the Army must take the unrestricted U-boat war into consideration in the course of their calculations, in order to relieve the situation at the Somme front by lessening the amount of ammunition transport, and to make it perfectly plain to the Entente that their efforts in this region are utterly useless. (To be continued.)

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Telegram No. 91.

In connection with No. 90.

The general situation would change in case President Wilson, in the course of following up what he has indicated to be his purpose, should make a proposal to the Powers for a peace mediation. This would necessarily have to be entered upon without definite propositions of a territorial nature, since such questions would be the subject of peace negotiations. Some action of this kind must, however, occur before long, since we are not in a position to remain quiet any longer, in view of the fact that England, in full recognition of the many difficulties with which she has to deal is continuously, and unimpeded, exercising stronger and stronger pressure upon the neutral Powers in order to improve, at our cost, her military and commercial situation; for this reason we would again take advantage of the freedom of action which we reserved for ourselves in the note of the 4th of May of this year. If Mr. Wilson desired to wait until shortly before or after his election, he would scarcely be left any further opportunity for taking such a step. Moreover, the negotiations could not be made to depend upon the prior conclusion of an armistice, but would have to be carried on simply between the belligerents themselves, and lead directly to the establishment of a preliminary peace within a short time. (To be continued.)

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Telegram No. 92.

In connection with No. 91.

A further postponement would result in making the military situation of Germany worse and in taking up further preparations on the part of the

Powers for the continuation of the war on into next year. So that for an indefinite period peace could no longer be thought of.

Your Excellency will cautiously discuss matter with Colonel House to learn what Mr. Wilson's purposes are. A peace move by the President which would appear spontaneous to those viewing it from without would be given the most serious consideration by us; and this very circumstance would probably have some effect on the result of Mr. Wilson's election campaign. Gerard has asked for leave as the result of a personal letter from House but has received no answer from the State Department.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

20

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, October 8, 1916.

Telegram No. 121.

WASHINGTON, October 5, 1916.

No. 89 discussed according to instructions.

Situation on this side remains the same as stated in telegrams Nos. 100 and 101.

Owing to the possibility of some unexpected setback, due either to the war or the election contest, Wilson is, for the reasons already given, willing to undertake the mediation only if he is reelected. The result of the election, of which the foreign policy is the sole pivot, is quite uncertain. The President shows surprising strength. If unrestricted U-boat warfare is really unavoidable, my urgent advice is to put it off at least until after the election; at this time an immediate break with the United States could be awaited with certainty; on the other hand, after election, there would seem to be a probability of mediation by Wilson, in case he were elected, if not at least a remote possibility of reaching a *modus vivendi* with the United States as a result of negotiations.

BERNSTORFF.

21

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 97.

Berlin, October 9, 1916.

His Majesty the Emperor desires that the enclosed *aide-mémoire* be handed to Ambassador Gerard upon his arrival over there.

Your Excellency will accomplish this in a strictly confidential manner

and will say that this *mémoire* is not to be understood as constituting a threat of a U-boat war. I should desire, however, that the Ambassador, before his interview with the President, should be reminded of the hopes which we placed in Wilson in the spring, and that reference should be made to the constantly increasing ruthlessness in the conduct of the war by our opponents. I assume that Gerard will consider my *mémoire* as strictly confidential, and not to be made public.

Should your Excellency, however, consider the delivery of the *mémoire* too risky, I shall ask you to refrain from delivering it.

For your Excellency's strictly confidential communication.

1. This *mémoire* was personally drawn up by His Majesty.
2. Unrestricted U-boat warfare will not be carried on for the present. (To be concluded.)

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Telegram No. 98.

Continuation of No. 97.

Your Excellency hinted to His Majesty in your last conversation at Charleville in April that President Wilson possibly would try towards the end of the summer to offer his good services to the belligerents for the promotion of peace. The German Government has no information as to whether the President adheres to this idea and as to the eventual date at which his step would take place. Meanwhile the constellation of war has taken such a form that the German Government foresees the time at which it will be forced to regain the freedom of action that it has reserved to itself in the note of May 4 last, and thus the President's steps may be jeopardized. The German Government thinks it its duty to communicate this fact to your Excellency in case you should find that the date of the intended action of the President should be so far advanced towards the end of the season.¹

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, October 14, 1916.

Telegram No. 126.

In connection with No. 125.

I had conversation with Wilson on the occasion of the delivery of the Imperial letter regarding Polish relief action. President was desirous of push-

¹ This document appears in English in the official text.—TRANSLATOR.

ing matter further and asked me how this could best be done. I answered that the difficulties were to be found exclusively on the British side.

Concerning the war on commerce which our U-boats are carrying on along the American coast, Wilson is naturally very anxious, because his entire hope of being reelected depends exclusively on this, that up to this time he, according to the opinion on this side of the water, has not allowed the United States to be drawn into war, and on top of this, has put an end to our so-called illegal attacks upon American lives. This whole structure will fall in ruins if Americans come to grief, or if strong manifestations of feeling are apparent against a U-boat war along the American coast. Up to this time no such feeling has existed. Indeed, the success of U-boat 53 has been acclaimed as a piece of sportsmanship. This attitude would nevertheless undergo a change if the incident should not retain its unique character. It was for this reason that Wilson spoke expressly with regard to continuation of U-boat warfare on the American coast. He found the circumstance particularly serious that two neutral ships had been sunk and also one Canadian passenger ship which was on its way to the United States. Such occurrences, he said, were inconceivable from the standpoint of the American public. Wilson gave his remarks a particular weight through referring to the fact that the leaders of the opposition, Roosevelt, Lodge, *et al.*, wanted war with Germany, a desire which he could not understand. He stated that he had but the one wish, to remain neutral and to help bring the war to an end, since in his opinion a decision could not be reached by force of arms. Neither of the two belligerent parties could bring about a decisive victory. For this reason, he said, it was better to make peace today than tomorrow, but he added that every opportunity of ending the war would vanish if the United States were drawn into the conflict. Since Wilson reiteratedly gave me to understand that he was holding himself ready in case his mediation were desired, I stated to him that in my opinion there was no likelihood of such an appeal on behalf of the belligerent Powers.

It was obvious that the thing that would please Wilson most would be for him to be urged directly to take up the question of concluding peace before the election, because he would then be certain of his reelection. But if he is reelected without this he would probably have courage enough to take the initiative. The outcome of the election is still very doubtful. Wilson is surprisingly strong since Hughes has had so little success as a speaker and Roosevelt does much damage.

BERNSTORFF.

23

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 101.

Re telegram No. 126.

BERLIN, October 14, 1916.

With regard to Polish relief situation, difficulties attributable only to England. The continuation of the U-boat war on the American coast, as I take occasion to state simply for the personal information of your Excellency, is not contemplated. Final position can be taken by us regarding activities of U-boat 53 only when it is back. Our promises to America will now, and until such time as we may possibly and positively disavow them, be adhered to. The demands here for unrestricted U-boat war are growing, owing to the increasing duration of the war, and the improbability of inflicting decisive military blow, without, however, shaking the position of the Government.

As before stated, definite proposal for peace mediation by Wilson impossible on account of his continued favorable attitude toward the Entente and after the speeches of Asquith and Lloyd George. A spontaneous appeal for peace, toward the making of which I request that he be further encouraged, would be gladly accepted by us. It is in Wilson's power, and consequently it is his duty to sound a halt to this murder of human beings. If he can not make up his mind to reach this decision alone, he should put himself in touch with the Pope, the King of Spain, and the European neutral nations. Such joint action would assure him of reelection and a place in history, because it could not be rejected by the Entente. Please request the assurance of regular communication through State Department and Embassy here.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

24

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, October 17, 1916.

Telegram No. 125.

WASHINGTON, October 10, 1916.

On the occasion of a further interview Wilson impressed upon me very earnestly that he feared that a carrying on of the U-boat war along the American coast would bring such excitement of public opinion on this side with regard to the election that he would not be able to control it. Thereupon followed the usual assertions that he was moved only by the urgent desire to keep the United States out of the war in order to be able to play a helping part in the conclusion of peace.

I shall telegraph details.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, October 24, 1916.

Telegram No. 134.

Answer to Nos. 97, 98, and 101. . . . WASHINGTON, October 20, 1916.

. . . As before stated, it is not to be expected that Wilson will take any action with regard to peace before the election. Nor that he will put himself in communication with the Pope and the King of Spain, since up to this time every proposal for joint action has met with invincible opposition here, based largely upon tradition. In the meantime from day to day the likelihood of Wilson's reelection increases. In case he is elected, I believe that he will try to bring about peace mediation at a very early date and that he will be successful, and this principally because the feeling against England has grown much more antagonistic, a development which the British are attempting to conceal as much as possible. If peace does not come about, we may look for serious differences of opinion between the United States and England. Up to this time, every new discussion with Germany about the submarine question has been made use of by our enemies in order to bridge over the differences with England. Even the appeals in the German press for unrestricted U-boat warfare are constantly turned to account in this connection.

BERNSTORFF.

Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 112.

BERLIN, November 8, 1916.

Kindly inform me by wire whether the attitude of the American Government in the U-boat question is going to be influenced by Hughes' election for the remaining period of Wilson's term or during Hughes' presidency.

The Navy desires to be at least allowed to torpedo armed enemy freight steamers without warning. Does your Excellency consider this, also, dubious, quite aside from the question of the likelihood of mistakes, particularly in connection with the fact that at present many Americans are engaged as seamen on such steamers?

V. JAGOW.

27

Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 113.

Urgent.

Confidential.

BERLIN, November 14, 1916.

It turns out from investigation that the *Marina* was torpedoed by a U-boat without warning because, on account of her protective coloring, her failure to display her colors, and additional structure for horses and armament, she was held to be an English transport, that is, an enemy auxiliary craft. According to the reports on the newspapers, she is stated to have been exclusively an armed English freight steamer.

Kindly wire at once your personal view of the possibility of settling this incident. Would it be sufficient if, in accordance with our memorial of February 8, 1916, we should base our attack on the statement that she was clearly recognized to be armed, or is disavowal, punishment of the captain, and compensation absolutely necessary? Disavowal is hardly possible, because in this case we would have to give up the position taken in the memorial referred to, which up to this time has been theoretically sustained. Is it possible to point out without objection that the *Marina* was requisitioned by the British Government, or chartered, and in such capacity, was an enemy auxiliary craft?

V. JAGOW.

28

Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 114.

BERLIN, November 16, 1916.

Kindly ascertain whether the President is going to take steps in the matter of peace mediation, and, if he is, what steps and when. Question important for decision regarding other possible steps in the same direction. What is the situation with regard to the Mexican question?

V. JAGOW.

29

Personal letter of Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

BERLIN, November 20, 1916.

DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF:

. . . As you have seen from other instructions which have been sent you, we are sympathetically inclined toward the peace suggestions of Presi-

dent Wilson, as before. His activities exercised in this direction are to be very definitely encouraged. But of course his suggestions with regard to mediation should not go so far as to take the form of concrete propositions (because these would, of course, be unfavorable so far as we are concerned). . . .

V. JAGOW.

30

Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 116.
Strictly confidential.

BERLIN, November 22, 1916.

Exclusively for your Excellency's personal information.

Provided the favorable military situation justifies it, it is our purpose, acting in conjunction with our allies, to announce forthwith our willingness to enter upon peace negotiations.

V. JAGOW.

31

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, November 24, 1916.
Telegram No. 152.
Answer to No. 113.

WASHINGTON, November 17, 1916.

It is urgently desired that the debated question with regard to armed merchant ships shall not be reopened, particularly because of Wilson's peace plan. I suggest that you instruct me by wireless, at your discretion, to recognize our error, to express our regrets, and to promise compensation and punishment. We can get along with no less. In so far as has been established here, the *Marina* was chartered during an earlier period, but was not under charter when torpedoed.

BERNSTORFF.

32

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, November 24, 1916.

Telegram No. 153.

Answer to No. 112 which was delayed.

In connection with No. 152.

WASHINGTON.

I urgently request that no change in the submarine warfare program be allowed to take place until it is decided whether Wilson will come out with his peace mediation. I consider this will occur in the near future.

BERNSTORFF.

33

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, November 25, 1916.

Telegram No. 154.

Answer to No. 114 of November 16 and

in connection with No. 153.

WASHINGTON, November 21, 1916.

Wilson instructed House of his own accord to inform me in strict confidence that at the earliest possible moment he would take steps in the direction of his peace mediation, presumably between this time and the New Year. In this connection he imposes as a condition that up to that time we express ourselves on the question of a peace move just as little as possible, either orally or in writing, in order to block a premature rejection on the part of our enemies, and that, further, we carry on the U-boat war in the strictest conformity with our promises and allow no new controversies to come up.

Wilson's reasons for the above conditions are as follows: He believes that he will be able to take up the matter of his mediation only if public opinion on this side continues as favorable to us as it has been during the course of the last months. For this reason he deplores the so-called Belgian deportations. Each new U-boat controversy would make the feeling against us increase, whereas, on the other hand, if this question can be, to all practical purposes, disposed of, the coolness with England will be increased. The British answer dealing with the black lists, together with the expressions of the English press concerning Wilson's election, have put government circles on this side very much out of humor. But unfriendly glances are again and again levelled in our direction as the result of the U-boat question. Wilson still hesitates to come forward with his peace mediation because the State Department expects a refusal from our enemies, whereas House is pushing the matter hard and is full of hope. In accordance with the instructions

which I have received I have encouraged him as much as possible by telling him that in my opinion our enemies simply could not refuse to take up negotiations; beyond this Wilson expects nothing. House seemed to me to be very much impressed when I reminded him that the British Government, during the course of the entire war, had constantly attempted by its lying methods and diplomatic *tours de force* to bring public opinion over to its side. This house of cards, founded on lies and misrepresentations, would at once fall to pieces if our enemies should reject the idea of negotiations, and by so doing openly admit that they entertain the lust of conquest. I stated that what I feared as much more likely to occur was that England would enter into negotiations in form only, and in the course of these negotiations would endeavor to put us in the wrong. I selected this line of argument because Wilson fears above all else the humiliation of having his advances rejected. If it really does come to the point of negotiations, even to negotiations devoid of result, Wilson will have to record the greatest kind of defeat.¹ Whether negotiations will be productive of results, I am not in a position to determine at this time, but in any case, aside from this government, a strong pressure in the direction of peace will be brought to bear if it really comes to the point of negotiations. The Mexican question still remains in a state of stagnation as the result of diplomatic negotiations. The situation is practically no longer of interest to anyone over here, and has proved insignificant in so far as the election is concerned.

If your Excellency desires mediation to come through Mr. Wilson, it is wholly essential, as is seen from the above, that the cases of the *Marina* and the *Arabia* should be completely settled without any further controversy, and that other new controversial questions be avoided. I believe that, with the assistance of House, I can quietly bring about the complete burial of both these cases, since Wilson himself desires it. As House stated, the reason why the President viewed this case as such a tragic aspect was because after the *Sussex* note, it was impossible for him to write another, and therefore the only remaining course was the breaking of diplomatic relations, unless the matter could be confidentially settled with my cooperation. . . .

BERNSTORFF.

34

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 121.

BERLIN, November 26, 1916.

When your Excellency's No. 154 arrived, the following note had already been handed to the American chargé d'affaires:

¹ *Sic.* Probably erroneous for: "the greatest kind of a success."

At 4:50 P.M. on the 28th ultimo a German submarine sighted about 26 knots from the Scilly Islands and in sight of land, a steamer which was painted gray, showed no flag and had wooden structures erected on deck for the transportation of horses. The officer in command of the submarine took this steamer, which was identical with the *Marina*, for a vessel used for the transportation of horses and in the service of the British Government which, according to the law of nations, he could at once attack in its character of an auxiliary war craft. He had all the more reason to reach this conclusion as the result of his experience in the Mediterranean, where he had had many occasions to observe vessels of this kind, and had discovered the fact that they had been used as British transport steamers during the Dardanelles operations. Under these conditions he had no hesitation about torpedoing the *Marina* without warning. The assumption of the commander that he had to do with an enemy transport steamer would seem to be correct since the *Marina*, as the German Government had been informed by reliable sources, had actually been used as a transport steamer for horse transportation in the service of the British Government. But if, in spite of this, this assumption should be proved by the facts established by inquiry of the American Government to be erroneous, the action of the commanding officer would have to be attributed to a regrettable error, and not to his instructions; in such case the German Government would have no hesitation in drawing the proper conclusions. In view of the above, the American Government is requested, in this connection, to communicate the result of their official findings.

It is understood that further negotiations will be carried on by your Excellency. For this reason kindly ask for an opportunity to take up with Lansing the proposition of having the result of the official American findings in the given case communicated to us before the end of the negotiations, from which the appropriate conclusions will be immediately drawn. Have the State Department assure us of adequate means of telegraphic communication for the purpose of a settlement of the *Marina* and *Arabia* cases.

. . . We would be glad to give Wilson's peace move the preference over our action referred to in our telegram No. 116 of November 22. At the same time it is our urgent wish that Wilson will decide to take early steps in the matter; if possible, by the time Congress opens or, in any event, soon thereafter. Should this be put off until the New Year or later, the lull in military operations during the winter campaign would moderate an inclination to peace on the part of public opinion in hostile countries and, on the other hand, would make essential further military preparations for the spring offensive, the carrying out of which would presumably strengthen existing military opposition to the peace move. Please urge these points cautiously and without impressment, and as representing your personal opinion in your talks with House, and keep me continuously informed by telegraph with regard to the situation. . . .

ZIMMERMANN.

35

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 123.

BERLIN, December 1, 1916.

Kindly call Colonel House's attention, in connection with No. 393 of December 1, to the incident of the steamer *Mississippi* and Lord Crewe's speech in the House of Lords, which make it difficult for us to keep from discussion the question of armed merchant ships.

For your Excellency's personal information: The Navy is urging with great earnestness a revision of the American memorandum of March 25 with regard to armed merchant ships, with particular reference to the demand that their character as instrumentalities of offensive warfare will have to be shown in each particular case. In order to avoid this question being opened in accord with your Excellency's proposal, Wilson's peace move must be initiated very shortly.

ZIMMERMANN.

36

The Foreign Office to the German Embassy at Washington

Telegram No. 383.

BERLIN, December 1, 1916.

In connection with offensive action of French steamer *Mississippi* which fired at German submarine at sight in English channel on November 8, the following instructions which were recently found on board a French merchantman are of special interest with the view to their protection against submarines.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CAPTAINS OF MERCHANT VESSELS¹

Part three . . . during the voyage.

28 b. Maneuvers to be undertaken in case of an attack. As soon as a submarine is sighted following a surface course, she should be offered the stern and the vessel should put on all steam and, in case of a sea-way, attempt to take such a course that in order to approach, the submarine will be obliged to ship considerable water which will reduce its speed and partly paralyze the fire of its artillery.

Commence firing as soon as the submarine is in good range.

If chase is given and the submarine has the advantage in speed do not hesitate to change course and ram it before it is too close.

No. 29. If a submarine is discovered in the act of submerging a short distance off put your engines at top speed presenting bow or stern depending on whether it is above water by more or less than six quarters counting from the bow. If the bow is presented, attempt to ram it.

If the submarine which has been sighted in the act of submerging is sufficiently far off, maneuver as if in the case of the submarine on the surface.

¹ This document appears in French in the official text.—TRANSLATOR.

These instructions together with speech made by Lord Crewe in House of Lords on November 15, where he said, "it was only possible to regard a German submarine as an enemy which it was permissible and proper to destroy, if you could, at sight," furnish conclusive evidence of aggressive purpose of armed merchantmen of allied Powers.

37

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 4, 1916.

Telegram No. 164.

Answer to No. 121.

WASHINGTON, December 1, 1916.

Marina question immediately taken up with Lansing, he said that his material was not yet complete. In my telegram No. 154 of November 21 I suggested to your Excellency to settle the *Arabia* case in the same way.

. . . In conversation Lansing laid great stress upon the American protest against the Belgian deportations. That on account of this the entire Belgian relief movement was jeopardized and that, further, opinion on this side of the water was becoming unfavorably colored and this at the precise moment when it looked as if peace negotiations might be undertaken. Lansing stated that it was his opinion that if the Imperial Government could find a way to meet the protests of the neutral Powers with regard to the Belgian question, this would create an impression which would weigh tremendously in our favor, and that it would, in all probability, result in the immediate possibility of taking up the first steps leading to peace negotiations. That, unfortunately up to the present time it had always happened that some obstacle came in the way.

The warning of the Federal Reserve Bank with regard to the unsecured obligations of foreign Powers is the first indication that this Government proposes to exert pressure upon our enemies in the cause of peace.

BERNSTORFF.

38

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 7, 1916.

Telegram No. 169.

In connection with No. 164 of
the 1st instant.

WASHINGTON, December 4, 1916.

. . . Everything is ready for peace move but with the vacillating(?) Mr. Wilson it is always a matter of doubt as to when he will come out with

it. All the authorities on this side have now been won over to the move. It follows that this might come overnight, particularly if it were possible for us to make concessions with regard to the Belgian question. Mr. Wilson believes that he is the object of such hatred in England that people would simply refuse to listen to him over there. This mental attitude explains the principal reason for his zeal in the Belgian question. In any event, this much is true, that House is constantly urging Mr. Wilson on to action and that peace propaganda is continuing to gain a stronger foothold here, in spite of the fact that, for the moment, the Belgian question stands very definitely in the way. If Mr. Wilson finds—as I have reason to expect—a strong demand for peace in Congress, he will probably reach a decision once and for all.

BERNSTORFF.

39

Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 128.

Confidential for your personal information.

BERLIN, December 9, 1916.

We have determined—probably on Tuesday the 12th of December—to take advantage of the favorable situation which has been brought about by the fall of Bucharest, and, in concert with our allies, to offer a peace proposal to our enemies in accordance with telegram No. 116 of the 22d of November. At this moment we run no danger of losing prestige by doing so, or of giving an appearance of weakness. If our enemies reject our proposal, then the odium of having continued the war will fall upon them. For the reasons given in our telegram No. 121, we were unable to wait any longer for President Wilson to reach a decision as to his peace move.

The American Embassy on this side will, in due time, receive a note in which the American Government will be requested to communicate our peace proposal to such of our enemies before whom it is representing our interests. With regard to others of our opponents, the communication will be made through the good offices of Switzerland or Spain. On the occasion of an interview with the Imperial Chancellor on the 5th of December, the American Chargé representing the President made, in confidence, the following statements among others: "What the President now most earnestly desires is a practical cooperation on the part of German authorities in bringing about a favorable opportunity for early and affirmative action by the President looking to an immediate restoration of peace." The Imperial Chancellor answered the American Chargé d'Affaires that he was "extremely gratified to see from the President's message that in the given moment

he could count upon the sincere and practical cooperation of the President in the restoration of peace, just as the President could count upon the practical cooperation of the German authorities." We believe that we are in a position to assume that our move is in accord with the President's wishes.

Kindly explain to the President and House in this wise.

V. STUMM.

40

Statement made by Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to American Chargé d'Affaires Grew upon the occasion of the delivery of the note of December 12, 1916¹

BERLIN, December 12, 1916.

I have asked you to come and see me in order to hand you personally this note, requesting you kindly to transmit it to your Government. The note has been issued by special order of His Majesty the Emperor, my august master. You will gather from its contents, that the Imperial Government declare their readiness to enter into negotiations of peace, asking the good offices of the United States Government to inform thereof the Governments of France, Great Britain, Japan, Roumania, Russia and Serbia.

I know what a lively interest the President of the United States, desirous of seeing peace restored to the world, is taking in anything that may lead to such an end. Peace alone will be able to give to the world what it is yearning for: the possibility for each nation to grow and develop towards a higher civilization in the interest of humanity. A lasting peace, however, will not come by further separating the nations by yet greater streams of blood, but by the common endeavor of all nations to let mutual respect and the recognition of their several rights take the place of sanguinary strife.

This was Germany's aim, when she drew her sword in defending her right to exist, as well as at the present moment, after the successes of her armies. We have never aimed at the destruction of our enemies, as I have repeatedly stated in my speeches declaring that we were ready to make peace. Mutual respect and good-will between the nations is, also, the lofty aim held by the President of the United States, whose recent message you kindly delivered to me on December 5 and in which the President asked for the cooperation of the German authorities to bring about a situation which would enable him to take early action in this direction. I sincerely hope that this formal and solemn offer made by Germany and her allies to enter forthwith into negotiations of peace will coincide with the President's wishes.

¹No. 41, *post*, p. 1000.

*Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to the American Chargé d'Affaires,
the Swiss Minister and the Spanish Ambassador*

BERLIN, December 12, 1916.

The most frightful war known to history has been raging over a great portion of the world for almost two and one-half years. This catastrophe, which the restraints of a common civilization stretching over a thousand years has not been able to hold in leash, strikes at the heart of the most noteworthy achievements of mankind. It threatens to lay in ruins the spiritual and material advancement which was the boast of Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. Germany and her allies, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey, have demonstrated their invincible strength in the course of this conflict. They have won tremendous successes against their opponents who had, as compared with them, such a preponderance in numbers and instrumentalities of war. Again and again have they maintained an unbroken front against the repeated assaults of the armies of their enemies. The last onslaught in the Balkans was rapidly and victoriously crushed. The latest occurrences prove that even the further continuance of the war will not suffice to destroy their power of resistance, that, on the contrary the general situation is such as to point to the likelihood of further successes.

The four associated Powers were forced to go to war in defense of their existence and their freedom of national development. And the heroic deeds of their armies have changed nothing in this connection. They have constantly entertained the conviction that their own rights and well-founded claims stand in no way in opposition to the rights of other nations. They do not entertain the intention of ruining or destroying their enemies.

Upborne by the consciousness of their military and economic strength and ready to maintain if necessary to the bitter end the conflict which has been forced upon them, but at the same time inspired by the desire to avoid further bloodshed and to put an end to the horrors of war, the four associated powers offer herewith to enter immediately upon peace negotiations. The proposals which they will offer at the time of these negotiations, the purpose of which is to secure the existence, honor, and a free opportunity to develop on the part of their peoples, constitute, according to their conviction, a basis for the restoration of a permanent peace. If, in spite of this appeal for peace and conciliation, the conflict should still continue, then it is the intention of the four associated Powers to carry it out to a victorious close, but they solemnly disclaim any and all responsibility therefor in the sight of humanity and history.

The Imperial Government has the honor to request the Government

of . . . , through your gracious good offices, to bring this communication to the attention of the Government of. . . .

I avail myself of this opportunity to again express to you the assurance of my highest consideration.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

42

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 20, 1916.

Telegram No. 182.

WASHINGTON, December 16, 1916.

Lansing told me that the following explanation which I was not able to send by wireless today, had been personally given out by Wilson himself: "President Wilson has decided that the notes of the Central Powers proposing a discussion of peace to the Entente Allies will be sent forward by the American Government acting as intermediary without any accompanying . . . offer of its own. He has not determined whether any action in behalf of peace will be taken later by the United States on its own account, but is holding himself in readiness to serve in any way possible toward bringing the warring nations together." From Lansing's remarks I got the impression that he is convinced that our enemies will take part in a conference, and that then this Government will have the opportunity of promoting peace talk. Since also it is the general opinion of the press on this side that our enemies will not be in a position to refuse to take part in a conference except at the risk of directing public opinion against them, I believe that the American Embassy in London, in spite of the official statement quoted above, will make the most of this view.

BERNSTORFF.

43

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 17, 1916.

Telegram No. 177.

Answer to No. 128.

WASHINGTON, December 13, 1916.

The matter with regard to House has been attended to, and he has gone to call at the White House. As yet I have had no answer from Wilson, but the general impression here is that he will support peace proposals in an energetic manner. Mr. Gerard, on the occasion of a farewell dinner

which was given to him in New York, made a speech in which he declared categorically that Germany had won, and that the victory could no longer be snatched from her. Although this speech was not made public, nevertheless it attracted attention, particularly in view of the fact that Mr. Gerard laid emphasis on the point that he had informed Mr. Wilson to the same effect.

BERNSTORFF.

44

Note of American Chargé d'Affaires Grew to Secretary of State Zimmermann

Rec. Berlin, December 21, 1916.

Translation.

BERLIN, December 21, 1916.

I have the honor to inform your Excellency that the President of the United States has instructed me to suggest to the Imperial German Government a course of action with regard to the present war which he hopes that the Imperial Government will take under consideration as suggested in the most friendly spirit and as coming not only from a friend but also as coming from the representative of a neutral nation whose interests have been most seriously affected by the war and whose concern for its early conclusion arises out of a manifest necessity to determine how best to safeguard those interests if the war is to continue.

The suggestion which I am instructed to make the President has long had it in mind to offer. He is somewhat embarrassed to offer it at this particular time because it may now seem to have been prompted by a desire to play a part in connection with the recent overtures of the Central Powers. It has in fact been in no way suggested by them in its origin and the President would have delayed offering it until those overtures had been independently answered but for the fact that it also concerns the question of peace and may best be considered in connection with other proposals which have the same end in view. The President can only beg that his suggestion be considered entirely on its own merits and as if it had been made in other circumstances.

The President suggests that an early occasion be sought to call out from all the nations now at war such an avowal of their respective views as to the terms upon which the war might be concluded and the arrangements which would be deemed satisfactory and as a guarantee against its renewal or the kindling of any similar conflict in the future as would make it possible frankly to compare them. He is indifferent as to the means taken to accomplish this. He would be happy himself to serve, or even to take the initiative in its accomplishment, in any way that might prove acceptable, but he

has no desire to determine the method or the instrumentality. One way will be as acceptable to him as another if only the great object he has in mind be attained.

He takes the liberty of calling attention to the fact that the objects which the statesmen of the belligerents on both sides have in mind in this war are virtually the same, as stated in general terms to their own people and to the world. Each side desires to make the rights and privileges of weak peoples and small States as secure against aggression or denial in the future as the rights and privileges of the great and powerful States now at war. Each wishes itself to be made secure in the future, along with all other nations and peoples, against the recurrence of wars like this, and against aggression or selfish interference of any kind. Each would be jealous of the formation of any more rival leagues to preserve an uncertain balance of power amidst multiplying suspicions; but each is ready to consider the formation of a league of nations to insure peace and justice throughout the world. Before that final step can be taken, however, each deems it necessary first to settle the issues of the present war upon terms which will certainly safeguard the independence, the territorial integrity, and the political and commercial freedom of the nations involved.

In the measures to be taken to secure the future peace of the world the people and Government of the United States are as vitally and as directly interested as the Governments now at war. Their interest, moreover, in the means to be adopted to relieve the smaller and weaker peoples of the world of the peril of wrong and violence is as quick and ardent as that of any other people or Government. They stand ready, and even eager, to cooperate in the accomplishment of these ends, when the war is over, with every influence and resource at their command. But the war must first be concluded. The terms upon which it is to be concluded they are not at liberty to suggest; but the President does feel that it is his right and his duty to point out their intimate interest in its conclusion, lest it should presently be too late to accomplish the greater things which lie beyond its conclusion, lest the situation of neutral nations, now exceedingly hard to endure, be rendered altogether intolerable, and lest, more than all, an injury be done civilization itself which can never be atoned for or repaired.

The President therefore feels altogether justified in suggesting an immediate opportunity for a comparison of views as to the terms which must precede those ultimate arrangements for the peace of the world, which all desire and in which the neutral nations as well as those at war are ready to play their full responsible part. If the contest must continue to proceed towards undefined ends by slow attrition until the one group of belligerents or the other is exhausted, if million after million of human lives must continue to be offered up until on the one side or the other there are no more to offer, if resentments must be kindled that can never cool and despairs engendered

from which there can be no recovery, hopes of peace and of the willing concert of free peoples will be rendered vain and idle.

The life of the entire world has been profoundly affected. Every part of the great family of mankind has felt the burden and terror of this unprecedented contest of arms. No nation in the civilized world can be said in truth to stand outside its influence or to be safe against its disturbing effects. And yet the concrete objects for which it is being waged have never been definitively stated.

The leaders of the several belligerents have, as has been said, stated those objects in general terms. But stated in general terms, they seem the same on both sides. Never yet have the authoritative spokesmen of either side avowed the precise objects which would, if attained, satisfy them and their people that the war had been fought out. The world has been left to conjecture what definitive results, what actual exchange of guarantees, what political or territorial changes or readjustments, what stage of military success even, would bring the war to an end.

It may be that peace is nearer than we know; that the terms which the belligerents on the one side and on the other would deem it necessary to insist upon are not so irreconcilable as some have feared; that an interchange of views would clear the way at least for conference and make the permanent concord of the nations a hope of the immediate future, a concert of nations immediately practicable.

The President is not proposing peace; he is not even offering mediation. He is merely proposing that soundings be taken in order that we may learn, the neutral nations with the belligerent, how near the haven of peace may be for which all mankind longs with an intense and increasing longing. He believes that the spirit in which he speaks and the objects which he seeks will be understood by all concerned, and he confidently hopes for a response which will bring a new light into the affairs of the world.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to your Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration.

GREW.

Several days ago Lansing wired me concerning Wilson's peace note and told me that the American Government finds its position more and more intolerable on account of the continued violation of its rights. For that

reason it was hoping for frank statements from the belligerent Powers with regard to their peace conditions. In answer I stated as my personal opinion that this would be very difficult to bring about except at a conference, on account of the press, etc. Lansing replied that disclosures could be confidential and might, little by little, lead to a conference. It would accordingly seem that the opinion which has become general here is correct, that Wilson would like to serve as a clearing house for further steps toward peace. He is strongly supported by public opinion on this side, with the exception of some of our quite rabid opponents, who characterize Wilson's note as pro-German.

BERNSTORFF.

46

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 142.

Re No. 188.

BERLIN, December 26, 1916.

I would say, in reply to the American peace note, that a direct exchange of views seems to us most adequate in order to reach the result desired. We suggest therefore the immediate gathering of delegates from the belligerent States at some neutral spot. We share the view of the President that only after the termination of the present war could the work of preventing the occurrence of future wars be taken up.

For your own strictly personal information: We will only consider some place in neutral Europe as the spot for the eventual gathering of the delegates. Quite aside from the difficulties involved in communicating with the United States, the experiences of Portsmouth teach us that American indiscreetness and intermeddling makes it impossible adequately to conduct negotiations. The interposition of the President, even in the form of a clearing house, would be detrimental to our interests and is therefore to be avoided. The basis for a future conclusion of peace we must settle by direct intercourse with our opponents if we do not wish to run the risk of failing to obtain the results desired because of pressure from the neutral Powers. For this reason we also decline to enter into the conference plan. On the other hand, we will not hesitate to send delegates to an international congress called after the conclusion of peace for the consideration of the problem of assuring the future peace of the world.

ZIMMERMANN.

Note of Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Gerard

BERLIN, December 26, 1916.

The undersigned has the honor to submit the following answer to the esteemed favor of the 21st instant of his Excellency the Ambassador of the United States of America, Mr. James W. Gerard.

The Imperial German Government has received and considered the lofty appeal of the President of the United States of America to lay the foundation for the restoration of a permanent peace in the same friendly spirit which is expressed in the President's communication. The President makes plain the purpose which it is his ardent desire to carry out, and leaves the choice of methods open. A direct exchange of ideas seems to the Imperial Government the method best adapted to bring about the desired result. It has the honor therefore, in conformity with its announcement of the 12th instant, in which it showed itself ready for peace negotiations, to suggest the immediate gathering of delegates of the belligerent States in some neutral place.

The Imperial Government, likewise, is of the opinion that the great work of preventing future wars can be actually undertaken only after the termination of the present conflict.

When this time comes it will be with pleasure that the Government will prepare to cooperate with the United States in this lofty task. While venturing to request the transmission of the enclosed answer to the President of the United States through the courtesy of his Excellency the Ambassador, the undersigned avails himself of this opportunity to assure him anew of his highest consideration.

ZIMMERMANN.

Answer of the Entente to the Central Powers regarding the peace proposal

Translation.

PARIS, December 30, 1916.

The Allied Governments of Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Montenegro, Portugal, Roumania, Russia, and Serbia, unitedly in the defense of the liberty of nations and faithful to the engagement they have taken not to lay down arms separately, have resolved to answer collectively the so-called proposals of peace which have been addressed them on behalf of the enemy Governments, through the intermediary of the United States, of Spain, of Switzerland, and of the Netherlands.

The Allied Powers are constrained to preface their answer by protesting strongly against the two essential assertions in the note of the enemy

Powers, which attempts to throw upon the Allies the responsibility of the war and which proclaims the victory of the Central Powers.

The Allies can not admit an assertion which is doubly inexact and which is sufficient to render barren any attempt at negotiation.

For thirty months the Allied Powers have suffered a war which they had tried by every means to avoid. They have demonstrated their attachment to peace by their acts. This attachment is as strong today as it was in 1914; after the violation of her engagements, it is not upon the word of Germany that peace, broken by her, can be based.

A suggestion without any conditions for initiating negotiations is not an offer of peace. The so-called proposal, devoid of substance and of precision, circulated abroad by the Imperial Government, appeals less as an offer of peace than as a maneuver of war.

It is based upon a systematic disregard of the nature of the struggle of the past, present, and future.

As to the past, the German note ignores all the facts, dates, and figures which prove that the war was desired, incited, and declared by Germany and Austria-Hungary. At The Hague it was the German delegate who rejected all suggestion of disarmament. In July, 1914, it was Austria-Hungary who, after having addressed to Serbia an ultimatum, of which there exists no precedent, declared war on her despite the satisfaction immediately obtained. The Central Empires thereafter repulsed every attempt made by the Entente to bring about a pacific solution to what was a local conflict. England's offer of a conference, the French proposal of an international commission, the request for arbitration addressed by the Emperor of Russia to the Emperor of Germany, the understanding reached between Russia and Austria-Hungary on the eve of hostilities; all these endeavors were left by Germany without answer and without issue. Belgium was invaded by an empire which had guaranteed her neutrality and which itself unhesitatingly proclaimed that treaties are "mere scraps of paper" and that "necessity knows no law."

As regards the present, the so-styled offers of Germany are based upon a "war map" which covers Europe alone; which expresses only the exterior and transitory aspect of the situation, but not the real strength of the adversaries. To conclude a peace based on the above would be to the sole advantage of the aggressors, who, having believed they could attain their object in two months perceive after two years that it will never be attained.

For the future, the ruins caused by the German declaration of war, the innumerable aggressions committed by Germany and her allies against the belligerents and against neutrals demand penalties, reparations, and guarantees; Germany eludes one and all.

In reality, the overture made by the Central Powers is but an attempt

calculated to work upon the evolution of the war and of finally imposing a German peace.

It has for its object the troubling of opinion in the Allied countries; this opinion, in spite of all the sacrifices endured, has already replied with an admirable firmness and has denounced the hollowness of the enemy declaration.

It desires to strengthen public opinion in Germany and amongst her allies already so gravely shaken by their losses, fatigued by the economic encirclement, and crushed by the supreme effort which is exacted from their peoples.

It seeks to deceive, to intimidate public opinion of neutral countries long ago satisfied as to the original responsibilities, enlightened as to the present responsibilities, and too farseeing to favor the designs of Germany by abandoning the defense of human liberties.

It strives finally to justify new crimes in advance before the eyes of the world; submarine warfare, deportations, forced labor, and enlistment of nationals against their own country, violation of neutrality.

It is with a full realization of the gravity, but also of the necessities of this hour that the Allied Governments closely united and in perfect communion with their peoples refuse to entertain a proposal without sincerity and without import.

They affirm, once again, that no peace is possible as long as the reparation of violated rights and liberties, the acknowledgment of the principle of nationalities and of the free existence of small States shall not be assured; as long as there is no assurance of a settlement to suppress definitely the causes which for so long a time have menaced nations and to give the only efficacious guarantees for the security of the world.

The Allied Powers, in termination, are constrained to expose the following considerations which bring into relief the particular situation in which Belgium finds herself after two and a half years of war. By virtue of international treaties signed by five of the Great Powers of Europe, amongst which figured Germany, Belgium profited by a special statute which rendered her territory inviolate, and placed the country itself under the guarantee of these Powers, sheltered from European conflicts. Nevertheless Belgium, despite these treaties, was the first to suffer the aggression of Germany. It is why the Belgian Government deems it necessary to specify the purpose which Belgium has never ceased to pursue in fighting beside the Powers of the Entente for the cause of right and justice.

Belgium has always scrupulously observed the duties imposed upon her by neutrality. She took arms to defend her independence and her neutrality violated by Germany and to remain faithful to her international obligations. On the fourth of August at the Reichstag the Chancellor acknowledged that this aggression constituted an injustice contrary to the right of nations and agreed in the name of Germany to repair it.

After two and a half years this injustice has been cruelly aggravated by the practice of war and occupation which have exhausted the resources of the country, ruined its industries, devastated its cities and villages, multiplied the massacres, the executions, and imprisonments. And at the moment that Germany speaks to the world of peace and humanity she deports and reduces to servitude. Belgium before the war had no other wish than to live in concord with all her neighbors. Her King and her Government have only one purpose: the reestablishment of peace and of right. But they will only consider a peace which Belgian citizens by the thousand (demand?) assures to their country legitimate reparation, guarantees and security for the future.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. Berlin, January 1, 1917.

Telegram 483.

WASHINGTON, October 17, 1916.

A certain excitement with regard to foreign politics has again prevailed during the course of the last week. Many circumstances have combined to bring about this condition. In the first place it was said that Ambassador Gerard was bringing a peace proposal from the German Government. In spite of all denials this rumor was given credence for some time because it had been set in motion by one of the first bankers of New York. Unfortunately, Mr. Gerard heard of this canard while he was still aboard ship, and as he was traveling in company with Herbert Swope, a denial sent by wireless appeared in *The World*, which was much worse in effect than the news itself. For it was stated there, that Mr. Gerard was coming to announce the fact that the unrestricted U-boat warfare was about to be launched. The U-53 appeared at Newport at just this moment, and two days later I had an interview with the President which had already been previously arranged for, and at which I delivered to Mr. Wilson the answer of His Majesty the Emperor and King in the matter of the Polish relief question. . . .

Everything has now calmed down again and the election, which will be decided in three weeks, is the sole subject of conversation. As I have already had the honor to inform you on several occasions, the result is doubtful in the extreme. While four months ago a Republican victory appeared to be assured, it is today very possible that Wilson may be successful. This is due to the fact that Mr. Hughes has succeeded in creating no lasting impression as a speaker, whereas Roosevelt has been blowing upon the war trumpet in his usual bombastic style. If Hughes is beaten he will

have Roosevelt to thank for it. The typical American is and will remain a pacifist. "He blesses peace and times of peace" and can only be driven to war as the result of impassioned popular excitement.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. Berlin, January 3, 1917.

Telegram No. 192.

WASHINGTON, December 29, 1916.

House told me that in Wilson's opinion a peace conference could not be brought about in the absence of preliminary confidential negotiations, since our enemies, as things are now, would reject the proposal by making its acceptance dependent upon the existence of certain conditions. This communication on the part of House was accompanied by an invitation for us to take part in absolutely confidential negotiations, a knowledge of which should be limited to Wilson, himself, and myself. Under these circumstances we could count upon absolute discretion, since Wilson and House, in contrast with other Americans, are both fairly able to keep secrets.

I beg to be informed at the earliest possible moment as to whether I shall reject such negotiations, or whether your Excellency will vest me with powers to take them up, and will provide me with the necessary instructions. As I have already stated, Wilson lays comparatively little weight on the territorial side of peace conditions. I (am?—ciphers missing) as in the past, of the opinion that the greatest weight is to be laid upon that feature which is again designated here as the "guarantees for the future." If we could give Wilson such guarantees to the very greatest possible extent, he believes that he will be able to bring about a peace conference, for in such case our enemies would be deprived of their main argument. For the latter are constantly asserting that we are only desirous of making peace at this time in order to commence the war all over again under conditions more favorable to us, while our enemies would be under the necessity of holding intact as long as possible the coalition which has been formed against us, in order to obtain a lasting peace. What Wilson's ideas are with regard to such guarantees your Excellency knows. They consist mainly in a limited disarmament of both land and sea forces, freedom of the seas, arrangements for the settlement of disputes by arbitration, and a league of nations. Taking your Excellency's speech to the Reichstag as a basis, I believe that the Imperial Government would agree to such guarantees on the condition that peace was brought about.

In order not to commit your Excellency in any way, my attitude toward

House has been in the main that of a listener. At the same time, I agree with Mr. House's opinion that without the help of the United States the point of bringing about a peace conference will not be reached. Our enemies will attempt to put us in the wrong by stating that, while it was true that we had suggested a conference, we had announced nothing in the nature of guarantees or conditions. Naturally, my judgment must be based on the attitude taken on this side. By our peace proposal we have brought about a great change in public opinion in this country. This advantage would be entirely lost if the thought which is being peddled about the country by our enemies should take root, that is, that we had made a purely theatrical peace move intended to affect the public opinion of Germany. What steps Wilson would take if your Excellency authorizes me to undertake such negotiations, is not as yet certain, and depends, essentially, upon your Excellency's instructions. House has been considering eventually going to England himself. The more your Excellency sees fit to communicate to me with regard to our condition and readiness to offer guarantees, so much more favorably will the matter be looked upon from this side. At the same time, I am ignorant as to whether or not your Excellency might prefer to have the negotiations come to nothing rather than accept American help. In my opinion, we shall not be obliged to agree that the United States shall take part in all the negotiations. All that would be necessary on our part would be to bind ourselves to the guarantees which would be agreed upon in detail in a general conference, after a conference of the belligerents had brought about a preliminary peace.

I am submitting the above proposal to your Excellency in detail because I am convinced that our enemies would not agree to enter into negotiations if strong pressure were not exerted from this side. This last will, in my opinion, however, be sure to take place if your Excellency, for the rest, believes that mediation on the part of the United States can be accepted. Leaving out the Belgian question, this Government should do us more good than harm in the course of negotiations, since the American is now for the first time coming to a full recognition of the true meaning of England's overlordship of the sea.

BERNSTORFF.

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 145.

BERLIN, January 4, 1916.

Regarding your Excellency's suggestion in No. 192, the prospects are good, particularly in so far as questions of a league of peace are concerned. Detailed instructions follow.

In connection with telegram No. 123 of December 1:

According to the opinion of the Navy and the Supreme High Command of the Army, the question of armed merchant ships is such as not to brook any further delay.

Kindly take up with Lansing the following memorial drawn up with strictest reference to the American memorandum of the 25th of March, leaving it with him as an *aide-mémoire*. The steps taken by us against armed merchant ships which we, from this time on, shall follow according to the terms of the memorial, naturally do not signify any withdrawal from our assurances contained in our note of the 4th of May 1916 with regard to the sinking of merchant ships.

Plan of ship-owners conference follows by special wireless. Memorial follows:

[Memorial inserted accordingly.]

Report by wire regarding result requested.

ZIMMERMANN.

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Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 148.

In connection with No. 145
of January 4.

BERLIN, January 5, 1917.

Kindly inform me immediately by wire of your Excellency's personal view of the impression and result of the overture contained in telegram No. 145. At the same time, an interview with Lansing on this point must not be postponed, since, as I inform you in strict confidence, steps will commence against armed ships in the immediate future.

V. STUMM.

53

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 149.

Answer to No. 192 of December 29.

For personal information.

BERLIN, January 7, 1917.

Intervention on the part of the United States in actual peace negotiations as such is positively not desired by us on account of the state of our public opinion. Moreover, we must for the present avoid everything which could serve to deepen the impression on the part of our enemies that our peace

proposal was the result of a critical situation existing on our side. That is not the case. We are convinced that we shall be able to bring the war to a victorious end, both from a military and an economic standpoint. For this reason, your Excellency will deal in a dilatory manner with the question of the disclosure of our peace conditions. On the other hand, I authorize you, even at this time, to put us on record as being willing to cooperate in that part of the program for which the President entertains a special interest and which appears to be identical with the so-called "second convention" outlined by Colonel House when here. Among these points we include an arrangement for the arbitral settlement of disputes, a peace league, the sifting of the disarmament question, and the question of the freedom of the seas. Moreover, we are in principle favorably inclined to those guarantees, which would be definitely agreed upon in detail at a general conference after a conference between the belligerents had brought about a preliminary peace. As proof of our good-will in this matter, we are also ready in principle to take up immediately negotiations with the United States looking toward the conclusion of a treaty of arbitration and a Bryan peace treaty. Your Excellency will inform the President of this and will request him to work out the program for securing the peace of the world and communicate it to us as soon as possible.

Please impress Colonel House and President Wilson further with the fact that our peace conditions are very moderate and are kept within reasonable bounds, in contrast to those of the Entente; that this is particularly the case with regard to Belgium, which we shall not annex.

We also desire a provision concerning communication and commercial relations after the war which shall eliminate any question of boycott, a request the acceptance of which, in view of the sane common sense characteristic of Americans, we believe we can rely upon without further argument. On the other hand, the Alsace-Lorraine question will not be discussed by us.

We should like to be informed of your Excellency's personal opinion regarding the amount of pressure which President Wilson would be in a position to exert upon the Entente to induce it to accept peace negotiations. In view of the experience of two years of war, it seems to us that the likelihood of an embargo on war material and foodstuffs, which undoubtedly would be in the first degree efficient in making it necessary for the Entente to hold its hand, and which would also be most desirable from our standpoint, is unfortunately very remote. Only an efficient pressure exerted along these lines could relieve us of the necessity of making use of the instrumentality of unrestricted U-boat warfare. If your Excellency should have any suggestions to make as to how unrestricted U-boat warfare can be undertaken without a break with America, I request immediate information by wire.

ZIMMERMANN.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 11, 1917.

Telegram No. 22.

Nos. 145 and 148 received today.

WASHINGTON, January 9, 1917.

Request most urgently that you postpone further steps until you have received my answer.

BERNSTORFF.

Answer of the Entente to the Government of the United States of America with reference to Wilson's note of December 18, 1916

Translation.

PARIS, January 12, 1917.

The Allied Governments have received the note which was delivered to them in the name of the Government of the United States on the nineteenth of December, 1916. They have studied it with the care imposed upon them both by the exact realization which they have of the gravity of the hour and by the sincere friendship which attaches them to the American people.

In general way they wish to declare that they pay tribute to the elevation of the sentiment with which the American note is inspired and that they associate themselves with all their hopes with the project for the creation of a league of nations to insure peace and justice throughout the world. They recognize all the advantages for the cause of humanity and civilization which the institution of international agreements, destined to avoid violent conflicts between nations would prevent; agreements which must imply the sanctions necessary to insure their execution and thus to prevent an apparent security from only facilitating new aggressions. But a discussion of future arrangements destined to insure an enduring peace presupposes a satisfactory settlement of the actual conflict; the Allies have as profound a desire as the Government of the United States to terminate as soon as possible a war for which the Central Empires are responsible and which inflicts such cruel sufferings upon humanity. But they believe that it is impossible at the present moment to attain a peace which will assure them reparation, restitution and such guarantees to which they are entitled by the aggression for which the responsibility rests with the Central Powers and of which the principle itself tended to ruin the security of Europe; a peace which would on the other hand permit the establishment of the future of European nations on a solid basis. The Allied Nations are conscious that they are not fighting for selfish interests, but above all to safeguard the independence of peoples, of right and of humanity.

The Allies are fully aware of the losses and suffering which the war causes to neutrals as well as to belligerents and they deplore them; but they do not hold themselves responsible for them, having in no way either willed or provoked this war, and they strive to reduce these damages in the measure compatible with the inexorable exigencies of their defense against the violence and the wiles of the enemy.

It is with satisfaction therefore that they take note of the declaration that the American communication is in nowise associated in its origin with that of the Central Powers transmitted on the eighteenth of December by the Government of the United States. They did not doubt moreover the resolution of that Government to avoid even the appearance of a support, even moral, of the authors responsible for the war.

The Allied Governments believe that they must protest in the most friendly but in the most specific manner against the assimilation established in the American note between the two groups of belligerents; this assimilation, based upon public declarations by the Central Powers, is in direct opposition to the evidence, both as regards responsibility for the past and as concerns guarantees for the future; President Wilson in mentioning it certainly had no intention of associating himself with it.

If there is an historical fact established at the present date, it is the wilful aggression of Germany and Austria-Hungary to insure their hegemony over Europe and their economic domination over the world. Germany proved by her declaration of war, by the immediate violation of Belgium and Luxemburg and by her manner of conducting the war, her simulating contempt for all principles of humanity and all respect for small States; as the conflict developed the attitude of the Central Powers and their Allies has been a continual defiance of humanity and civilization. Is it necessary to recall the horrors which accompanied the invasion of Belgium and Serbia, the atrocious régime imposed upon the invaded countries, the massacre of hundreds of thousands of inoffensive Armenians, the barbarities perpetrated against the populations of Syria, the raids of Zeppelins on open towns, the destruction by submarines of passenger steamers and of merchantmen even under neutral flags, the cruel treatment inflicted upon prisoners of war, the juridical murders of Miss Cavell, of Captain Fryatt, the deportation and the reduction to slavery of civil populations, etc. The execution of such a series of crimes perpetrated without any regard for universal reprobation fully explains to President Wilson the protest of the Allies.

They consider that the note which they sent to the United States in reply to the German note will be a response to the questions put by the American Government, and according to the exact words of the latter, constitute "a public declaration as to the conditions upon which the war could be terminated."

President Wilson desires more: he desires that the belligerent Powers

openly affirm the objects which they seek by continuing the war; the Allies experience no difficulty in replying to this request. Their objects in the war are well known; they have been formulated on many occasions by the chiefs of their divers Governments. Their objects in the war will not be made known in detail with all the equitable compensations and indemnities for damages suffered until the hour of negotiations. But the civilized world knows that they imply in all necessity and in the first instance the restoration of Belgium, of Serbia, and of Montenegro and the indemnities which are due them; the evacuation of the invaded territories of France, of Russia and of Roumania with just reparation; the reorganization of Europe guaranteed by a stable régime and founded as much upon respect of nationalities and full security and liberty of economic development, which all nations, great or small, possess, as upon territorial conventions and international agreements suitable to guarantee territorial and maritime frontiers against unjustified attacks; the restitution of provinces or territories wrested in the past from the Allies by force or against the will of their populations, the liberation of Italians, of Slavs, of Roumanians and of Czecho-Slovaks from foreign domination; the enfranchisement of populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks; the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman Empire decidedly ⁽¹⁾ to western civilization. The intentions of His Majesty the Emperor of Russia regarding Poland have been clearly indicated in the proclamation which he has just addressed to his armies. It goes without saying that if the Allies wish to liberate Europe from the brutal covetousness of Prussian militarism, it never has been their design, as has been alleged, to encompass the extermination of the German peoples and their political disappearance. That which they desire above all is to insure a peace upon the principles of liberty and justice, upon the inviolable fidelity to international obligation with which the Government of the United States has never ceased to be inspired.

United in the pursuits of this supreme object the Allies are determined, individually and collectively, to act with all their power and to consent to all sacrifices to bring to a victorious close a conflict upon which they are convinced not only their own safety and prosperity depends but also the future of civilization itself.

¹ Apparent omission.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 14, 1917.

Telegram No. 205.

Answer to No. 148.

WASHINGTON, *January 10, 1917.*

Memorial delivered to Lansing. In my opinion, to proceed along the lines set out in this memorial will bring peace mediation of Wilson to naught and, instead, will result in a break with the United States unless we refrain from action, at least until some agreement has been reached with this Government. It is possible that we may succeed in having Americans warned against taking service on ships which are armed for purposes of attack. But in any case this Government must be allowed time for this purpose. Since Wilson decides *everything*, any interview with Lansing is a mere matter of form. He never answers until he has received instructions from Wilson. This being the case, the latter will first have to read the memorial.

I can not tell from here how much reliance your Excellency places upon Wilson's peace move. Aside from this, a sense of duty impels me to state positively that I consider a break with the United States unavoidable if we proceed in accordance with the memorial.

BERNSTORFF.

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 157.

Strictly confidential.

BERLIN, *January 16, 1917.*

After curtly rejecting our peace proposal, the Entente has announced in its answer to Wilson that it is determined to proceed with the war for the purpose of robbing Germany of her provinces in the West and the East, of laying Austria-Hungary in ruins, and of destroying Turkey. In proceeding with the conduct of the war directed toward these aims, the Entente is violating all rules of international law in that it is unlawfully standing in the way of the legitimate carrying on of commerce between Germany and neutral Powers and between neutral Powers themselves. Out of regard for the neutral Powers, Germany has not up to this time made full use of the U-boat weapon. Since the Entente has made an understanding based on the principles announced by the Central Powers of equal rights to all nations impossible, and has declared that the only peace which is possible is one to be dictated by the Entente, based in part on the destruction, and in part

on the degradation of the Central Powers, Germany is no longer in a position to justify a further abstention from the use of such weapon. We do not doubt that the President will be able to form a correct judgment concerning the position into which we have been forced and which was created by the brutal lust for war and destruction on the part of the Allies, and that he will recognize that the intentions of the Allies, now fully disclosed, justify Germany in exercising that freedom of action which was reserved by her in the note of May 4, 1916.

Accordingly, Germany will meet the measures which her opponents have taken in violation of international law by forcibly preventing, after February 1, any communication by sea from and to England and France—and this includes neutral shipping—in a zone surrounding Great Britain and France. Neutral ships as well which are found within this zone will be sunk. The boundary of this zone is marked by a line twenty nautical miles offshore along the coast of Holland to Terschelling lightship, longitude of Terschelling lightship to Udsire, a line proceeding thence over the point 62 degrees north, zero degrees longitude, to 62 degrees north 5 degrees west, proceeding thence to a point 3 nautical miles south of the southernmost point of the Faroe isles, thence over point 62 degrees north 10 degrees west to 61 degrees north 15 degrees west, thence 57 degrees north 20 degrees west to 47 degrees north 20 degrees west, further on to 43 degrees north 15 degrees west, then along latitude 43 degrees north up to 20 nautical miles from Cape Finisterre, and at distance of 20 nautical miles offshore along the north coast of Spain to the French boundary.

By dint of these measures the German Government promises the early termination of the war and the restoration of that peace which the President has so much at heart. Germany and her associates had hoped with the President that this result might be reached through diplomatic negotiations. Since, owing to our opponents, the war must continue to take its course, the Imperial Government believes that it may indulge in the certain expectation that the President will not close his mind to the necessity of an expedient which is adapted to hasten the termination of this frightful bloodshed. The German Government is all the more convinced of this since, by the oppressive measures of the Entente, neutral Powers are injured to the greatest extent, being bound to give up all trade and commerce or to limit it to the extent arbitrarily set by our opponents, unrestrained by the principles of the law of nations.

We are therefore convinced of the fact that from now on the President will warn all American ships from entering the restricted zone and American nationals from entrusting either passengers or wares to ships which are returning to English and French ports in the restricted zone.

Moreover, it lies quite within the power of the President to bring about an early termination of the war in a most effective way by exercising an

energetic pressure upon England in the form of an embargo on foodstuffs and war materials.

The above is for the present for your Excellency's personal information. It must be kept unqualifiedly confidential for military reasons. No suggestions to the American Government; but wait until the 1st of February to officially communicate contents. When making this communication, call attention to the fact that, in the orders to be issued to the U-boats provisions are being made for a sufficient opportunity for sparing neutral ships and for the safety of passengers on unarmed enemy passenger ships, and that, moreover, neutral vessels which may be in transit on the 1st of February to or from ports in the restricted zone can avoid entering it, or shall be allowed to leave it by the shortest possible route without danger of being sunk, if all possible steps are at once taken to provide them with full information. In like manner, neutral ships will be allowed to leave the ports of the restricted zone before the evening of February 4 and to take the shortest cut out of the zone.

In answer to the possible objection based on the ground of the jeopardizing of the safety of Americans on board enemy freight steamers on their way to the limited zone, you will kindly point out that hostile shipping companies are in a position to prevent in time any entrance into the restricted zone.

Your Excellency will renew the earlier proposal of free passage of American passenger steamers in a limited number, to Falmouth. Conditions for the above: fixed and announced course; no contraband; individual designs limited only to these ships. Course to be decided upon.

I know full well that by taking this step we run the danger of bringing about a break and possibly war with the United States. We have determined to take this risk. But I request your Excellency to advise me as to any possible means likely to afford an opportunity for taking steps to diminish the danger of a break. And particularly I request your opinion as to whether the protective measures adopted regarding the sparing of neutral ships and passenger steamers are sufficient, or whether it would be preferable to set a definite time and if so, what time. I call your particular attention, finally, to the matter of taking steps to render German steamers absolutely unseaworthy. Your Excellency will be held responsible for seeing that the necessary cue is sent out in time to prevent any German steamer from falling into foreign hands in serviceable condition. Acknowledge receipt immediately.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 66.

BERLIN, January 18, 1917.

Please suggest by wire to whom we shall turn over the representation of German interests in Washington in case of a break.

ZIMMERMANN.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 22, 1917.

Telegram No. 212.

Answer to No. 149 of January 7.

WASHINGTON, January 16, 1917.

Upon receipt of authorization from your Excellency, I made use of it in conversation with Mr. House. He informed me that Wilson looked upon this announcement of the Imperial Government as extremely valuable. I can say nothing more of a definite nature with regard to the further course of the Wilson peace move. But this much is sure, that at this moment the President has no other intention than to bring about peace, and will attempt to carry out this purpose with the utmost energy and by all possible means. A further announcement from Wilson is to be expected in the immediate future, presumably in the form of a message to Congress. He will probably make it a summons to the American people to assist him in forcing peace; at least he and House are speaking highly of the Hearst newspaper articles, which are written in this spirit. It is still impossible today to say whether it is really coming to the point of an embargo on all exports. It is possible that the mere threat may suffice to force our enemies to a conference. It results from the above that we should not have any further difficulties in connection with the old submarine questions. I hope even for a *modus vivendi* in the question of armed merchant ships. But we must not go ahead too soon; otherwise a conflict may arise before the President has taken further steps.

Strange as it may sound to German ears, Wilson is now considered pro-German. His note was attributed to our influence, and Gerard's speech strengthens this impression. The latter is in accordance with instructions which Gerard received here. Our opponents on this side have apparently gone mad and stop at nothing in placing obstacles in Wilson's way. This fact explains the attacks against the President, as well as the sordid accusations, inspired by Republicans, that the Embassy has engaged in market speculations, in connection with which my name (naturally without the

slightest justification) has also been mentioned. The German Embassy is being openly denounced by all our opponents here as being responsible for everything.

BERNSTORFF.

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Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 22, 1917.

Telegram No. 222.

Answer to No. 157 of January 16.

WASHINGTON, January 19, 1917.

War unavoidable if we proceed as contemplated. The danger of a break could be lessened by the setting of a definite period, say, one month, for the purpose of sparing neutral ships and passengers, since a previous timely warning seems to be impossible under the present contemplated action. I shall have to give the cue for rendering the German steamers unseaworthy on the 1st of February, as the carrying out of my instructions here will be looked upon as a declaration of war and for this reason will be followed by a policy of the strictest surveillance. As it is, another *Lusitania* case can, seemingly, be expected soon.

If military reasons for the (omission ?) are absolutely imperative, a postponement would be urgently desirable in view of my telegram 212. Wilson believes he will be able to obtain peace on the basis of the principle announced by us of equal rights to all nations. House told me even yesterday that Wilson was preparing to go ahead in the immediate future, since he considered the situation favorable for a peace conference, as a result of our announcement with regard to a future league of peace.

BERNSTORFF.

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Message of President Wilson to the Senate, January 22, 1917¹

Delivered to Secretary of State

Zimmermann, January 22, 1917,

by American Ambassador Gerard.

Translation.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SENATE:

On the eighteenth of December last I addressed an identic note to the Governments of the nations now at war requesting them to state, more

¹ Translator's Note: It has seemed inadvisable to make a retranslation of Mr. Wilson's speech back from the German. Except for the instances noted below, the spirit as well as the literal meaning of the terms employed have been satisfactorily reproduced in the German version.

definitely than they had yet been stated by either group of belligerents, the terms upon which they would deem it possible to make peace. I spoke on behalf of humanity and of the rights of all neutral nations like our own, many of whose most vital interests the war puts in constant jeopardy. The Central Powers united in a reply which stated merely that they were ready to meet their antagonists in conference to discuss terms of peace. The Entente Powers have replied much more definitely and have stated, in general terms, indeed, but with sufficient definiteness to imply details, the arrangements, guarantees, and acts of reparation which they deem to be the indispensable conditions of a satisfactory settlement. We are that much nearer a definite discussion of the peace which shall end the present war. We are that much nearer the discussion of the international concert which must thereafter hold the world at peace.¹ In every discussion of the peace that must end this war it is taken for granted that that peace must be followed by some definite concert of power which will make it virtually impossible² that any such catastrophe should ever overwhelm us again. Every lover of mankind, every sane and thoughtful man must take that for granted.

I have sought this opportunity to address you because I thought that I owed it to you, as the council associated with me in the final determination of our international obligations, to disclose to you without reserve the thought and purpose that have been taking form in my mind in regard to the duty of our Government in the days to come when it will be necessary to lay afresh and upon a new plan the foundations of peace among the nations.

It is inconceivable that the people of the United States should play no part in that great enterprise. To take part in such a service will be the opportunity for which they have sought to prepare themselves by the very principles and purposes of their polity and the approved practices of their Government ever since the days when they set up a new nation in the high and honorable hope that it might in all that it was and did show mankind the way to liberty. They can not in honor withhold the service to which they are now about to be challenged. They do not wish to withhold it. But they owe it to themselves and to the other nations of the world to state the conditions under which they will feel free to render it.

That service is nothing less than this, to add their authority and their power to the authority and force of other nations to guarantee peace and justice throughout the world. Such a settlement can not now be long postponed. It is right that before it comes this Government should frankly formulate the conditions upon which it would feel justified in asking our people to approve its formal and solemn adherence to a League for Peace. I am here to attempt to state those conditions.

¹ Retranslation: "to a close observance of its obligations."

² Retranslation: "impossible in fact."

The present war must first be ended; but we owe it to candor and to a just regard for the opinion of mankind to say that, so far as our participation in guarantees of future peace is concerned, it makes a great deal of difference in what way and upon what terms it is ended. The treaties and agreements which bring it to an end must embody terms which will create a peace that is worth guaranteeing and preserving, a peace that will win the approval of mankind, not merely a peace that will serve the several interests and immediate aims of the nations engaged. We shall have no voice in determining what those terms shall be, but we shall, I feel sure, have a voice in determining whether they shall be made lasting or not by the guarantees of a universal covenant;¹ and our judgment upon what is fundamental and essential as a condition precedent to permanency should be spoken now, not afterwards when it may be too late.

No covenant of cooperative peace that does not include the peoples of the New World can suffice to keep the future safe against war; and yet there is only one sort of peace that the peoples of America could join in guaranteeing. The elements of that peace must be elements that engage the confidence and satisfy the principles of the American Government, elements consistent with their political faith and with the practical convictions which the peoples of America have once for all embraced and undertaken to defend.

I do not mean to say that any American Government would throw any obstacle in the way of any terms of peace the Governments now at war might agree upon, or seek to upset them when made, whatever they might be. I only take it for granted that mere terms of peace between the belligerents will not satisfy even the belligerents themselves. Mere agreements may not make peace secure. It will be absolutely necessary that a force be created as a guarantor of the permanency of the settlement so much greater than the force of any nation now engaged or any alliance hitherto formed or projected that no nation, no probable combination of nations could face or withstand it. If the peace presently to be made is to endure, it must be a peace made secure by the organized major force of mankind.

The terms of the immediate peace agreed upon will determine whether it is a peace for which such a guarantee can be secured. The question upon which the whole future peace and policy² of the world depends is this: Is the present war a struggle for a just and secure peace, or only for a new balance of power? If it be only a struggle for a new balance of power, who will guarantee, who can guarantee, the stable equilibrium of the new arrangement? Only a tranquil Europe can be a stable Europe. There must

¹ Retranslation: "citizens of an all inclusive federation." Error apparently due to use of term "*Bürger*" instead of "*Bürge*."

² "Policy"; retranslated "happiness."

be, not a balance of power; but a community of power; not organized rivalries, but an organized common peace.

Fortunately we have received very explicit assurances on this point. The statesmen¹ of both of the groups of nations now arrayed against one another have said, in terms that could not be misinterpreted, that it was no part of the purpose they had in mind to crush their antagonists. But the implications of these assurances may not be equally clear to all,—may not be the same on both sides of the water. I think it will be serviceable if I attempt to set forth what we understand them to be.

They imply, first of all, that it must be a peace without victory. It is not pleasant to say this.² I beg that I may be permitted to put my own interpretation upon it and that it may be understood that no other interpretation was in my thought. I am seeking only to face realities and to face them without soft concealments.³ Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last. Only a peace the very principle of which is equality and a common participation in a common benefit.⁴ The right state of mind, the right feeling between nations, is as necessary for a lasting peace as is the just settlement of vexed questions of territory or of racial and national allegiance.

The equality of nations upon which peace must be founded if it is to last must be an equality of rights; the guarantees exchanged must neither recognize nor imply a difference between big nations and small, between those that are powerful and those that are weak. Right must be based upon the common strength, not upon the individual strength, of the nations upon whose concert peace will depend. Equality of territory or of resources there of course can not be; nor any other sort of equality not gained in the ordinary peaceful and legitimate development of the peoples themselves. But no one asks or expects anything more than an equality of rights. Mankind is looking now for freedom of life, not for equipoises of power.

And there is a deeper thing involved than even equality of right among organized nations. No peace can last, or ought to last, which does not recognize and accept the principle that governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that no right anywhere exists to hand peoples about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were property. I take it for granted, for instance, if I may venture upon a single example, that statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a

¹ Retranslated "statements."

² This sentence omitted.

³ German version adds: "which would be out of place."

⁴ German version adds: "is the right state of mind" to this sentence instead of making it the initial clause of the following sentence.

united, independent, and autonomous Poland, and that henceforth inviolable security of life, of worship, and of industrial and social development should be guaranteed to all peoples who have lived hitherto under the power of governments devoted to a faith and purpose hostile to their own.

I speak of this, not because of any desire to exalt an abstract political principle which has always been held very dear by those who have sought to build up liberty in America, but for the same reason that I have spoken of the other conditions of peace which seem to me clearly indispensable—because I wish frankly to uncover realities. Any peace which does not recognize and accept this principle will inevitably be upset. It will not rest upon the affections or the convictions of mankind. The ferment of spirit of whole populations will fight subtly and constantly against it, and all the world will sympathize. The world can be at peace only if its life is stable, and there can be no stability where the will is in rebellion, where there is not tranquillity of spirit and a sense of justice, of freedom, and of right.

So far as practicable, moreover, every great people now struggling towards a full development of its resources and of its powers should be assured a direct outlet to the great highways of the sea. Where this can not be done by the cession of territory, it can no doubt be done by the neutralization of direct rights of way under the general guarantee which will assure the peace itself. With a right comity of arrangement¹ no nation need be shut away from free access to the open paths of the world's commerce.

And the paths of the sea must alike in law and in fact be free. The freedom of the seas is the *sine qua non* of peace, equality, and cooperation. No doubt a somewhat radical reconsideration of many of the rules of international practice hitherto thought to be established may be necessary in order to make the seas indeed free and common in practically all circumstances for the use of mankind, but the motive for such changes is convincing and compelling. There can be no trust or intimacy between the peoples of the world without them. The free, constant, unthreatened intercourse of nations is an essential part of the process of peace and of development. It need not be difficult either to define or to secure the freedom of the seas if the governments of the world sincerely desire to come to an agreement concerning it.

It is a problem closely connected with the limitation of naval armaments and the cooperation of the navies of the world in keeping the seas at once free and safe. And the question of limiting naval armaments opens the wider and perhaps more difficult question of the limitation of armies and of all programs of military preparation. Difficult and delicate as these questions are, they must be faced with the utmost candor and decided in a spirit of real accommodation if peace is to come with healing in its wings, and come to stay. Peace can not be had without concession and sacrifice.

¹ Phrase "with a right comity of arrangement" omitted.

There can be no sense of safety and equality among the nations if great preponderating armaments are henceforth to continue here and there to be built up and maintained. The statesmen of the world must plan for peace and nations must adjust and accommodate their policy to it as they have planned for war and made ready for pitiless contest and rivalry. The question of armaments, whether on land or sea, is the most immediately and intensely practical question connected with the future fortunes of nations and of mankind.

I have spoken upon these great matters without reserve and with the utmost explicitness because it has seemed to me to be necessary if the world's yearning desire for peace was anywhere to find free voice and utterance. Perhaps I am the only person in high authority amongst all the peoples of the world who is at liberty to speak and hold nothing back. I am speaking as an individual, and yet I am speaking also, of course, as the responsible head of a great government, and I feel confident that I have said what the people of the United States would wish me to say. May I not add that I hope and believe that I am in effect speaking for liberals and friends of humanity in every nation and of every program of liberty? I would fain believe that I am speaking for the silent mass of mankind everywhere who have as yet had no place or opportunity to speak their real hearts out concerning the death and ruin they see to have come already upon the persons and the homes they hold most dear.

And in holding out the expectation that the people and Government of the United States will join the other civilized nations of the world in guaranteeing the permanence of peace upon such terms as I have named, I speak with the greater boldness and confidence because it is clear to every man who can think that there is in this promise no breach in either our traditions or our policy as a nation, but a fulfilment, rather, of all that we have professed or striven for.

I am proposing, as it were, that the nations should with one accord adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world: that no nation should seek to extend its polity over any other nation or people, but that every people should be left free to determine its own polity, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful.

I am proposing that all nations henceforth avoid entangling alliances which would draw them into competitions of power, catch them in a net of intrigue and selfish rivalry, and disturb their own affairs with influences intruded from without. There is no entangling alliance in a concert of power. When all unite to act in the same sense and with the same purpose, all act in the common interest and are free to live their own lives under a common protection.

I am proposing government by the consent of the governed; that freedom

of the seas which in international conference after conference representatives of the United States have urged with the eloquence of those who are the convinced disciples of liberty; and that moderation of armaments which makes of armies and navies a power for order merely, not an instrument of aggression or of selfish violence.

These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no others. And they are also the principles and policies of forward looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail.

62

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 25, 1917.
Telegram No. 225 of January 21.
Answer to No. 162.

I suggest Switzerland. . . . Moreover this question is of all the greater significance since if period of grace is allowed, I consider it entirely possible that Wilson will merely break off relations and not declare war and that, on the contrary, he will redouble his efforts in behalf of peace.

BERNSTORFF.

63

Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 169. BERLIN, January 26, 1917.

Agree to eventual turning over of representation to Switzerland.

If possible, your Excellency will receive simultaneously the text of the note which we, in all probability, shall hand over to Mr. Gerard in answer to Wilson's message; it is therein stated, among other things, that the attitude of our opponents makes it impossible for us, just at this time, to assist in working out the President's lofty aims which, broadly speaking, are at one with the principles and wishes of Germany; besides this, stress strongly the result of the English war of starvation which, as a matter of fact, does not strike the military forces of Germany but exposes thousands of women, children, invalids and persons of advanced years to fearful torments, and

forces the Imperial Government, on behalf of its own associated peoples and in the highest sense of humanity, not to leave any means untried in the future to bring the war to an end, after our attempt to reach an understanding has met with a pointed challenge. (To be continued.)

V. STUMM.

Telegram No. 170.

Continuation of No. 169.

In carrying out the instructions of telegram No. 157, in your note, the construction of which in matters of detail is left to your Excellency, as well as the task of presenting the trend of thought in such a way as to fit the American psychology, please do not say "out of regard for the neutral Powers" (sentence three) and instead of "neutral ships as well" will be sunk, it is better to say "all ships" (sentence seven).

V. STUMM.

64

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 171.

Re our telegram No. 157.

BERLIN, January 26, 1917.

The official communication to Government on your side is to be made on the evening of January 31. Special emphasis should not be laid on the fact that neutral ships also in the restricted zone will be sunk. Definite time for the sparing of neutral shipping and unarmed enemy passenger steamers can not be given, because the result of military measures would be seriously affected thereby. When in communication with Wilson, be good enough to lay stress upon the fact that the time to be accorded, above referred to, will be of sufficient duration. Having full confidence in your Excellency's adroitness, I trust you to place the measures we have taken before the American Government in a manner well adapted to American psychology; the steps which are to be taken by the Navy are to be thus expressed instead of as stated in telegram No. 157:

From February 1, 1917, all maritime commerce will be attacked with all arms and without warning in the restricted zones about Great Britain, France and Italy and in the Eastern Mediterranean as herein stated, to wit: The restricted zone is. . . .

Neutral ships which travel in the restricted zone will do so at their own risk. Although methods have been adopted looking to the safety, within a limited period, of neutral ships which on February 1 shall have come into

the vicinity of the restricted zone in the course of voyages to the ports of that zone, it is still a matter of the very greatest importance that they be warned by all possible means and their courses altered. Neutral ships within the ports of the restricted zones will be able to leave those zones with equal safety, if they leave before February 5 and take the shortest course to an unrestricted area.

ZIMMERMANN.

65

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. January 26, 1917.

No. 563.

WASHINGTON, December 11, 1916.

In the last stages of a presidential election campaign, it was formerly the habit of the American press to have its attention so concentrated upon questions of domestic politics that there was very little room left for the consideration of foreign affairs. In sharp contrast to this, differences of opinion in the press with regard to questions of foreign politics played a very important rôle during the campaign of this year; but the discussion was naturally so completely influenced by the contentions and considerations of party politics that a report of the attitude of the press toward the European belligerents at this time would give no accurate idea of the situation. Especially was this the case with regard to Germany. On one side the organizations of the Republican Party found themselves under the necessity of being decidedly moderate in their expressions regarding Germany on account of the voters of German descent, whereas on the other side the Democratic press branded the Republican candidate as a Kaiserite on account of his German-American adherents, and at the same time indulged more than ever in the throwing of mud at Germany and everything that could be called German; until the hope which dawned in the last weeks of the election campaign to entice into the Democratic camp still larger bodies of the "hyphenated" suddenly brought about a moderation in the tone of these papers as well. It is only now, after the irrationalities of the presidential election have been finally relegated to the past, that it again becomes possible to form an approximately clear idea of the attitude of the press toward Germany and the other belligerent Powers.

This idea can be briefly explained by the statement that the American press, generally speaking, takes up the cudgels for one side or the other with less vigor than formerly, and, for the rest, is heartily tired of war. But this does not indicate by any means that our opponents are not still supported, as heretofore, by a number of very influential adherents who are constantly

and faithfully fighting on the side of the Allies, who let slip no opportunity to disparage Germany, and who constitute a danger not to be underrated by us in case a crisis threatens. It is even apparent that the note struck against Germany by organizations of this movement, which is most strongly represented in New York, Boston and Philadelphia, has become in the last months perhaps even more expressive of hatred than before. But the great mass of influential journals, particularly in those parts of the country far removed from the Atlantic coast, have unquestionably become less biased; they do not love us and do not trust us, but at the same time they have learned to know England and how to estimate her.

The present attitude of America regarding the Entente Powers, with which the attitude of the independent press for the most part coincides, was set forth recently in New York *Tribune*, one of the foremost champions of our opponents, in the following manner:

Despite a very wide-spread sympathy for France and a well-defined affection for Great Britain in a limited circle of Americans, there has been no acceptance of the Allied point of view as to the war, and there is not now the smallest chance that this will be the case. . . .

The thing that the British have failed to get before the American people is the belief that the war was one in which the question of humanity and of civilization was uppermost for the British. The Germans have succeeded in making the Americans in very great numbers believe that it is purely and simply a war of trade and commerce between the British and the Germans, and the various economic conference proposals have served to emphasize this idea.

The overpowering of Greece, the reckless policy towards Ireland since the Easter revolt—upon which a well-managed press service by the Irish on this side keeps public opinion fixed, in spite of the strict English censorship—the selfish sacrifice of Serbia, Montenegro and Roumania, as well as the economic measures against Holland and Scandanavia in violation of international law, have severely damaged England's reputation as the protector of small nations. Certain rather too candid expressions on the part of the English press with regard to the American Federal Government, their derogatory cartoons of the President, as well as the patronizing air toward the United States which is found in many English war publications and also in the English daily journals, evoke a constantly growing resentment on this side of the water. For instance, a comparatively recent reference in the London *Morning Post* to supposed desires on the part of Germany to colonize in South America at some past date, from the carrying into effect of which Great Britain is supposed to have protected the United States. The repeated and systematic attempts on the part of the British press bureau to bring America into conflict with Germany over questions arising out of the U-boat war, are unfavorably received. The curt British answers to American representations in connection with the questions concerning the

black list and the post blockade, as well as England's latest little malicious pleasantry, the refusal of the safe-conduct requested for the newly-appointed Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, which refusal is even called by so pro-British a publication as the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* "a British affront," have called forth a strong note of dissatisfaction. "It is unmistakable," says the *Evening Sun*, which is friendly to the Entente, speaking with reference to England, "that American opinion has been stirred and sympathy estranged by many acts which have damaged our interests and wounded our national self-respect."

But above all, the great failures on the part of the Supreme High Command of our opponents and the ineffectiveness which has characterized their moves and which has been subjected here to the exaggerated criticisms of the layman—the prominent Springfield *Republican* speaks of it as "a lamentable succession of false moves"—have called forth a general outburst with regard to the lack of capacity of our opponents which has had a strong deterrent effect upon the earlier and wide-spread enthusiasm over the heroic spirit of the French army and its leader, who is very popular here. "We give thanks for Joffre," ran the headlines of a typical leading article of the *New York Sun* on Thanksgiving Day. Finally, the warning to American banks issued by the Federal Reserve Board not long ago, to beware of the accumulation of large amounts of foreign unsecured obligations—a warning which could only have reference to the issue announced by the banking house of Morgan, of English and French uncovered short-time securities—has dealt a fierce blow to the belief in the limitless economic resources of France and England.

In the last few days those publications in the pay of Great Britain or of France, chief amongst which may be mentioned the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald* and *Evening Telegram*, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, the *Chicago Herald* and the *Providence Journal*, as well as a number of other sworn supporters of the Entente Powers, amongst which the *New York Tribune*, the *New York Sun*, the *Evening Sun*, the *New York Evening Post*, the *Journal of Commerce*, the *New York Globe*, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, the *Boston Evening Transcript*, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, have made a herculean effort to fill the breach which has been made in the reputation of our opponents from the point of view of public opinion on this side. This is manifested particularly in the headlines and in the manner in which space is accorded to the war news in the papers above referred to. Every piece of news which is unfavorable to the German cause, even if it emanates from an unreliable source, appears in bold headlines in the most prominent place imaginable. Every gain of territory by the Allies, slight though it may be, is hailed as a great victory, and dispatches from private news agencies which are plainly recognizable as flagrant inventions, even when in flat contradiction to the official reports of our enemies, appear as full-fledged

facts in the leading columns of the newspapers. Their leading articles reek of unfriendliness and hatred for Germany. Their correspondence columns are filled with communications full of malice and spite directed against Germany and its associates, and in their *feuilletons*, or Sunday supplements, about the strongest statements have been made against us which have as yet appeared even in the American press. But it would seem as if its propaganda lacked the effectiveness which it has hitherto enjoyed. With the exception of comments bearing on the Belgian and *Lusitania* themes, their pronouncements fail to create a real impression any longer.

On the other hand, the continuously friendly attitude of the ten newspapers which belong to the Hearst syndicate, which are read daily by more than three million readers in all parts of the country, have become, of late, even more friendly on account of the English boycott regarding the International News Service and the exclusion of all Hearst publications from circulation in Canada. Mr. Hearst has answered the inconceivably short-sighted policy of the British authorities against his news service with a large number of caustic leading articles of a whole page in length, directed against the British censorship, which are said to have sadly shaken the confidence of the American press in news coming from England—a confidence which has long since been diminishing. In the articles in question, not only was the present English system of suppressing and misrepresenting the truth submitted to a pitiless criticism, but attention was also called to the fact that America has for years been systematically led astray by London with regard to her judgment of foreign peoples—the “degenerated” Frenchman, for example. Moreover, it was repeatedly shown in detail in the Hearst papers how in the fall of 1916 the prospects of the Central Powers were actually brilliant, whereas those of England and of her allies were thoroughly hopeless. In this connection, stress is to be laid upon the fact that, in spite of this, the Hearst papers are in no way to be characterized as blindly adhering to the German cause, for they contain much which is hardly to our taste, such as occasional articles about the “German peril” which gained a new impetus from the exploits of the U-boat *Deutschland* and, particularly, the U-53, which were used as capital in connection with the question of an army and navy increase. The publications in question have for their basis a healthy American policy, but work to our advantage in view of their sharp anti-British tendency far more effectively than papers outspokenly pro-German would be able to do. The greatest benefit of the attitude of the organs of the Hearst syndicate, which, as stated, are friendly to Germany, is to be found in the fact that their influence is not limited to one city or to one small portion of the country but is felt over the entire union. An English critic, S. K. Ratcliffe, recently wrote the following concerning American newspapers in the Manchester *Guardian*: “Northern papers are of no account in the South; the most influential New York journals do not

exist for the people of the Pacific coast and carry very little weight in the Middle States. Hence, summaries of opinion . . . confined to a small number of papers published east of the Mississippi are imperfectly representative of the Republic." This territorial limitation of the influence of the foremost American newspapers, made the subject of the above correct comments, is overcome in the main by the Hearst organization. For the leading articles which are published today by the New York *American* appear tomorrow in the affiliated publications of Boston, Chicago, and Atlanta, and day after tomorrow in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Another factor which has improved the attitude of the American press toward Germany is the recent marked development of the wireless news service. The thing to be considered in this connection is not so much the development of the trans-oceanic service, a very considerable portion of the dispatches of which do not, unfortunately, appear to be of interest to the press on this side of the water, as the radiographic transmissions of the foreign news sent by special American reporters in Berlin and at the German fronts to their newspapers or news agencies on this side. Of those interesting dispatches which have been transmitted here in an ungarbled condition, those particularly coming from Messrs. William B. Hale, Karl v. Wiegand, Cyril Brown, and Carl W. Ackerman, have probably worked largely to our advantage, particularly at the critical periods of the attempt to break through in South Galicia and of the battles at the Somme, on which occasions the press of this country, without the special news service coming by way of Nauen, would have been completely misled by the mass of news coming from London.

Among other American newspaper men who have been active in Germany, reference must be made to Herbert Swope who, after his return here, published in the *World* and in other Pulitzer publications a series of fourteen essays with regard to the position and morale of Germany, which attracted as much notice on the part of the press as it did on the part of the reading public. It was in a very distasteful manner that Mr. Swope expressed in his first articles, which came out directly before election day—obviously nothing more than an election maneuver—the deep hatred of the German people for the United States and the supposedly general desire in all German circles to see Mr. Wilson defeated in the election as a penalty for his unneutral attitude. On the other hand, he did us a very rare service in his later articles by giving a picture of the economic situation of Germany at that time, in a form as convincing as it was true, which banished all doubts on this side as to the possibility of Germany's being starved out by her opponents and gave a new impetus to the general respect for Germany's fortitude and efficiency in organization.

The great and just recognition which the American press accords German "efficiency" at every opportunity—and in the last months it has again had

ample opportunity to note obvious evidences of the same—can nevertheless change little if any the deep sentiment against Germany. Let anyone but touch on the above-mentioned themes of Belgium and the *Lusitania* and there are but few journals which do not proceed to indulge, either in extreme or moderate form, in terms of vituperation against German "frightfulness" and "ruthlessness." It is much to be regretted that, as the result of the latest Belgian deportations, this deep-rooted antipathy to Germany on the part of the entire press, on account of Belgium, has received a new impetus. The indignation of the press over the "slavery" to which the Belgians are subjected is a wide-spread, deep-seated, and genuine emotion. Even publications which launch fairly caustic attacks against English outrages, condemn these deportations in the sharpest manner. The fact that the interview of Governor General v. Bissing with the journalist Cyril Brown regarding this measure was published as a front-page article in the *New York Times*, has unfortunately not had the slightest effect over here.¹ Mr. v. Bissing's second announcement with regard to the same subject, in which he expressed, among other opinions, the view that it was his duty to see that as few Germans as possible should be withdrawn from the front for the garrisoning of Belgium, was water over the mill for the hostile press organs. "The cat out of the bag," writes the *New York Times*, which does not hesitate to recall that the responsibility for the execution of Edith Cavell lies with Mr. v. Bissing. "Not a word about economic necessity. Germany needs men at the front. . . . Every dozen or so of Belgians deported means a German soldier released from watching them and sent to the front. Simple, almost crude in fact, and completely German." The *Philadelphia Public Ledger* says: "The original offense of the invasion of Belgian territory regardless of treaty obligations has almost been obliterated by the cruelty which is now depopulating the land, stripping it of all its resources, sending its people into exile and slavery, making a wilderness and calling it order. There has not been such tragedy since the fierce barbarian tribes swept over Europe; none would have believed two years ago that it could be enacted." Expressions such as "Huns," "Attila," "Hohenzollern slave trade," and the like are the order of the day, and excitement is further fanned by reports from London and Le Havre which nobody here is in a position to check up, as well as by provocative interviews, amongst which a conversation between Mr. Cartos de Wiard with the *World* correspondent calls for particular mention. The news that Mr. Lansing had "protested" the Belgian deportations in Berlin was received by the entire press with great acclaim. The official announcement which followed, to the effect that this protest was not in the name of the United States, but in the name of the Kingdom of Belgium through representation by the American Government, aroused displeasure as well as the desire that the federal government should make

¹ *N. Y. Times*, Nov. 12, 1916, p. 1. Interview on Nov. 11.—EDITOR.

representations in Berlin on its own behalf. Resolutions of protest are being sent to the President and published in the press, and indignation meetings of unusual dimensions are scheduled to take place in Boston and New York, which will give rise to further anti-German demonstrations in the press.

On the question of the U-boat war, the American press is wholly united in the stand that a withdrawal of the assurances which were given after the *Sussex* case, or even a conscious infringement thereof, must, so to speak, automatically lead to a breaking off of diplomatic relations with Germany; and the press is absolutely certain on the point that the severance of relations would be neither more nor less than the first step in the direction of open war. The great majority of the leading American journals express upon every possible occasion the honest hope that such an eventuality will not occur. It is only the chauvanistic, anti-German element in the press which takes the view that the *casus rptionis* has actually come and lends itself willingly to the task of publishing and making the subject of comment the English reports of supposed cruelties of the German under-sea boats in the most sensational way. The papers belonging to this category are copiously provided from London with pertinent material, namely, communications regarding supposed sinkings without warning, which, on their side—probably with the assistance of the British authorities on this side of the water—they magnify with trumped-up reports of the survivors of these “sacrifices to German frightfulness” who have arrived at these shores. In spite of the masterly adroitness with which this moulding of public opinion against our submarine warfare is being carried on over here, it can nevertheless be safely asserted that it is constantly losing ground. Deep-felt and honest as the horror of the American people is with regard to cases such as the sinking of the *Lusitania*—a fact which must always be emphasized—it is obvious that its indifference towards the destruction of foreign merchant vessels is equally great *as long as the rules of war on commerce are observed*. The fact is that people here have simply become accustomed to read the daily reports announcing the sinking of another half dozen of British or other craft. The daily journals print these occurrences quite in the order of routine and only call particular attention to them when the daily number reaches a particularly high figure. From time to time you can even perceive a certain spirit of malice in the editorial columns of many newspapers because England, which has boasted that it has become master of the submarine situation, is now being so constantly and mercilessly bled by the U-boats.

One phase of the U-boat war has, it must be admitted, brought the entire American press into a state of excitement, namely, the privateering cruise of the U-53 off the coast of New England. The work of destruction of this submarine, carried on in the immediate vicinity and resulting in the crip-

pling of all shipping commerce for days, was too much even for the moderately-inclined newspapers, and resulted in quite energetic outbreaks against our "recklessness." Apparently this circumstance is being seized upon by our enemies as capital for the development of a new kind of public opinion, in view of the fact that mysterious British war-ships situated along the Atlantic coast are sending out radiographic warnings against German submarines which are supposedly approaching, warnings which in part are being published broadcast under scare-heads, and are bringing about bad feeling. These reprehensible activities in which, naturally, those press organs in England's service played the most prominent part, led, not long since, to a vigorous warning from Secretary of State Lansing directed against the unknown authors of these rumors. Speaking very generally, emphasis may be laid upon the fact that the great influence which the State Department has exercised upon the Washington correspondents of the leading publications of the country during the last months has, whenever the U-boat question threatened to become critical, inevitably pointed in the direction of conciliation whereby in more than one case, and particularly in the cases of the sinking of the *Marina* and the *Arabia*, the expression of a deeply felt irritation on the part of the press has been curbed.

With regard to the general war situation, the conviction has for some time past been forcing itself upon the great majority of influential American journals that a decisive victory is no longer to be expected on the part of either group of belligerent Powers. With the exception of a constantly diminishing minority, which even today comfort their readers with the thought of the "ultimate victory" of the Entente Powers, the verdict of the American press with regard to the probable result of the war is "a draw", "a stalemate." Only a few publications, among which are the Hearst syndicate, proclaim themselves as believing in "a stalemate or a victory for the Teutonic allies." How the situation is really regarded by those organs which are serving our opponents and which still, as before, hold fast to the fiction of the failure of a German war of conquest, may be gleaned only occasionally from casual assertions such as the following admission of the New York *Tribune*, which is clamoring against a peace at the present stage: "The American people should be made to see that if the Allies should conclude a peace at the present time the result would be a tremendous victory for Germany." But nevertheless such isolated expressions of a different opinion are powerless to change the general impression that by far the greater majority of the leading papers look upon the war as undetermined, particularly after the fruitless results of our Verdun operations, and the failure of the great offensive on the Somme and in South Galicia, as well as in view of the fact, generally recognized as settled, that the British blockade has not succeeded in bringing about the desired starvation of Germany.

Our latest feats of arms in Roumania have scarcely served to alter this situation. These results are being accepted on all sides either with manifestations of satisfaction or displeasure, and without a single spark of sympathy for the conquered country, the incident being from time to time sporadically referred to as a military feat of the very highest order—the above in connection with the great hopes which our opponents and those organs of the press which are at their service had entertained with regard to the entrance of Roumania into the war. The consensus of opinion expressed in the press is that the conquering of Roumania, although calculated to open up new resources for Germany, is not likely to have any decisive influence upon the war situation in the East and the West or upon the still unbroken British control of the seas.

The view that the war has reached the point of deadlock, which has been constantly announced by certain newspapers ever since the time of President Wilson's Charlotte speech of May of this year, and which, with the exception of the obviously pro-Ally papers, has lately become the generally accepted view, is closely connected with discussions regarding the question of the restoration of peace, which, in the opinion of the American press, is analogous in many ways to a mediation move on the part of the United States or of all neutral nations.

There was a time when a very considerable portion of the American press appeared to adopt as their slogan the expression then going the rounds, that "Wall Street dreads nothing more than that peace should break out." Those times, however, have passed by long since. The longing for an early cessation of hostilities in Europe is today an honest one, participated in by almost the entire press. The following comes to us from the enemy's camp through the instrumentality of the New York *Tribune*, which tends generally to convert its readers to a less humane point of view: "For the millions of Americans the present war is a tragedy, a crime, a piece of wilful and collective madness, and the greatest service America can render is (to allude to the catch phrase coined in connection with the fruitless peace mission of Henry Ford) to get 'the boys out of the trenches.'"

For this reason the discussion of the preliminaries of peace has taken up a very large amount of space in the newspapers and, in part also, in the magazines. Reports of the sessions of many and various peace societies are set out in the greatest detail, and everything bearing upon the question of peace which is to be found in news transmitted from overseas is printed in the most conspicuous places and made the subject of adequate comment in leading articles.

It would be going too far to attempt to give even an approximately detailed picture of these discussions which form the main topic of all the press of the country. One circumstance only is such as to call for closer consideration: The attitude of the influential papers toward the readiness for peace

on the part of Germany, which has been openly announced by your Excellency in the course of the past weeks on three distinct occasions.

The great speech which your Excellency made in the budget committee of the Reichstag on the 9th of November was published here, unfortunately, at a time when both the press and the public were giving their entire attention to the result of the presidential election, which at first had appeared to be uncertain. It was, therefore, pretty generally printed only in the form of an abstract, especially in the evening papers. And as far as the editorial columns were concerned, it was practically given no space at all. An attempt to bring about a subsequent discussion in the press by the publishing of given extracts from the speech in the form of a brochure, or at least to have the newspapers which had only made an abstract consent to republish the whole text, was unsuccessful; only *Current History*, a special war magazine of the *New York Times*, felt constrained to publish the speech in full, in its December number. On the other hand, that passage in the speech announcing our readiness to take part in an international conference for guaranteeing peace after the war, has been broadly published here and has received corresponding attention. When, in accordance with instructions, I sent this passage as an official German declaration to the League to Enforce Peace for announcement at its banquet held here on the 24th of the month, it was published over the entire country in connection with the press notices of this event, which attracted considerable attention here, and was discussed by many journals in a much more friendly tone, especially as Germany's skeptical attitude up to this time with regard to the question of a peaceful settlement of international disputes has always worked very much against us in this country.

The interview which your Excellency accorded the American journalist Hale appeared in the ten Hearst papers in a quite impressive form, and was, moreover, printed by all the other members of the International News Service. In the *New York American* on Thanksgiving Day it filled the columns of the front page, which was graced with a picture of your Excellency. The newspaper republished the article three days later, presumably owing to numerous requests.

The willingness on the part of Germany to enter upon peace negotiations, again announced in this interview of your Excellency, as well as the declaration of your Excellency delivered in the Reichstag on the 29th day of last month, that Germany was ready for any peace which could guarantee its existence and its future, have brought about rather lengthy discussions in the *New York* papers in the last few days, relating mainly to the expression "a peace guaranteeing our existence and future"; and all join in the common conclusion that a further and more detailed setting forth of the German peace conditions is earnestly to be desired.

The *New York Times* says: "All depends on what guarantees of the

existence and of the future of Germany are expected." The newspaper presents the arguments which Germany might well offer in support of the guarantee of its future in territorial matters, but announces in conclusion that these are all superficial matters and, coming back to its favorite theme, closes in the following words: "Deeper than all, fundamental in any discussion of peace, is the question of the German political ideals, of German *Machtpolitik* and *Weltpolitik*, of Prussian militarism. . . . The fear, the practical certainty, that v. Bethmann-Hollweg's guarantees would be not merely guarantees of the existence and the future of Germany, but of new and not distant wars with her, stands in the way of any serious discussion of his remarks."

The *Evening Sun* remarks in a sarcastic tone that it is obvious that no land can be given such guarantees as *Deutschland über Alles*. Its verdict reads, also: "The peace that Germany craves still is a peace that will enable her to begin the next war in five or ten years with a certainty of immediate victory and complete conquest of the overlordship of Europe if not America too."

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* says: "If . . . an inconclusive peace, a peace based upon the theory that the war is a draw, a peace fertile in the liabilities to future trouble, is not in the mind of the German Chancellor, what *is* in his mind? He should speak out. He will never have a better opportunity to be specific. The whole neutral world is listening, ready to give careful and intelligent consideration to his words."

More important than these and other expressions indulged in by those papers which are setting their course along the channel of our enemies, is the pertinent leading article of the *World*, which is the most successful paper in expressing the attitude of the administration on foreign questions. This newspaper says: "If Germany is ready to end the war, the first thing for the Imperial Government to do is to make definite proposals of peace. Those proposals need not be made officially to the Allies through the United States or any other intermediary. They could be made to the world at large. The Chancellor could describe to the Reichstag the conditions under which Germany would regard her existence and future as assured. . . ."

Germany began the war. It is proper that Germany should take the first steps towards ending the war, but something more than vague generalizations are necessary. At present there is nothing to talk about. There are no terms, not even extravagant and ridiculous terms, that can be discussed as a possible basis of settlement.

Thus far, there has been no evidence of good faith in the repeated German professions of a desire for peace. In consequence nobody takes them seriously, and nobody will take them seriously until there is at least a tentative proposal of terms. When that is made, the responsible ministers of other belligerent Governments will be forced to meet the issue. Public

opinion in Great Britain and France, no less than in Germany and in Austria-Hungary, will have a chance to make itself heard.

When peace comes, it can not be merely the peace of diplomats and of Governments. It must be a peace in which popular sentiment has the final word, and popular sentiment has no means of expression until there is something tangible to discuss."

The dual impression with regard to peace discussions in the American press is that, on the one hand—with the exception of a small number of influential newspapers—it is desirous of peace and that, in accordance with this desire, it makes it plainly apparent that it is inclined to proceed to the order of the day, passing over the extravagant war aims of the statesmen of the Entente, so often announced; but that, on the other hand, the press has thus far been unable to discover any feasible approach toward an early conclusion of peace, and is unable to see, even in the last announcements which your Excellency has made and which have been discussed in detail in but few publications, any definite step in this direction.

The change in the administration of the Foreign Office has been made the subject of rather detailed comment in the leading articles of influential newspapers, which are generally accustomed to ignore a change of ministry in Europe in their news columns. This comment deals with the new Secretary of State more than with the characteristics of the retiring Secretary, which have never been well known in this country. The *New York Times* merely accorded Mr. v. Jagow a few friendly words in which it characterized him as a "gentleman in war and peace," referring thereby to the subject of his conferences with Baron Beyens and Sir Edward Goschen at the time of the outbreak of the war, and in addition thereto recognized and commented upon his friendly attitude during the negotiations relating to the submarine question. On the other hand, the taking over of the portfolio of the Secretary of State by Mr. Zimmermann was greeted with great acclaim by very many publications and even, it may be said, on the whole, if we except the fact that his recent attitude toward the question of armed merchant ships, communicated by telegram, appeared a little disquieting to a few publications. It is quite possible that the favorable tone of the comments in question are due to the very friendly and very wide-spread remarks of Ambassador Gerard and the journalist Swope, addressed to the new Secretary of State, as well as to a rather long article published in the *New York Evening Post* and in other journals by Gilbert Hirsch, entitled "Our Friend Zimmermann." The note which had been struck on this side and again sounded with similar effect in the German press comments which have been received over here and reprinted everywhere, that Mr. Zimmermann was a particularly warm friend of the United States, was joyfully reechoed in the American press. And, moreover, the fact was made the subject of general comment that in the person of Mr. Zimmermann, an

official not of the diplomatic service but of the less impressive consular branch of the service and, moreover, belonging to the untitled class, had been awarded the important post of the head of foreign affairs, a post which up to that time had been reserved for "Prussian junkerdom." And to this comment were added speculations to the effect that perhaps there was really reason to believe that this occurrence constituted the first step in a régime of liberalism which a not inconsiderable portion of the American press was hoping for on behalf of Germany and of the world as well.

The announcement of autonomy for Poland was received, to put it mildly, with scepticism by the American press, which is comparatively well informed on the Polish question. An assertion by the piano virtuoso, Paderewski, who is actively employed here in the interests of the war sufferers of Poland, that "this means only more suffering for my people; it means that another army will be raised and that there will be more killing and more devastating," was repeated by a large number of journals, and held up as indicative of what was to be expected with regard to the Austro-German proclamation. Many newspapers described it as a simple move in order to gain new recruits. Other newspapers announced sarcastically that the proclamation left to later regulation the all-important question, namely, the delimitation of the boundaries of the new State, and its form of government. Only a few influential newspapers, among them the New York *Evening Post* and the Philadelphia *North American*, accorded the associated Governments a certain amount of recognition in the matter, in that, as they pointed out, the cruel hand of Russia, which had so long imposed its burdens on the country, could never be forgotten. The Polish press on this side maintains a very reserved attitude. Its stand is the result of the following passage of a leading article of the weekly paper *Free Poland* which came into existence during the present war and is published by the Polish National Council of America. "What the Poles desire is an independent Poland. The Powers have acknowledged Poland's right to live, but either with a limitation of independence or diminution of territory. The Russians would fain lop off Eastern Galicia. And now the Germans grant Poland an autonomy, but without Posen, West Prussia or Silesia, in return demanding a Polish army to take up their cause against Russia. Though this move on the part of Germany will at least draw the world's attention to the inalienable rights of Poland as a nation and make of the Polish question an international one, yet it must not be forgotten that the Poles in Europe will vehemently protest against any curtailment of their national aims and aspirations."

The impression which the Polish measures have made upon the press of this country, on the whole quite unfavorable, was subsequently slightly improved by the announcement that the Polish Jews had been recognized as an independent religious community. In view of the fact that as the result of this announcement people quite generally ventured to believe that the

first step had been taken toward the political and educational emancipation of the Eastern Jews, it was discussed with great interest, especially as the Jews of America exercise a strong influence over a considerable portion of the press of this country, particularly that of New York.

Finally, attention is to be called to the attitude of the press upon a question which of itself is of a purely domestic and economic nature, but which promises to attain the most far-reaching importance in connection with the foreign policy, namely, the question of a grain embargo. The prices of most foodstuffs have during the last month shot up to such an abnormal extent that the New York *Sun* can say without any excessive exaggeration that if the war were to last another two years the prices of foodstuffs in Berlin and Vienna would finally reach the high mark set by New York. The serious condition of the wheat market in particular, and the fairly certain prospects of a sharp rise in the price of wheat in the course of the winter or next spring, afford the press the opportunity for pertinent comment on the occasion of which the question as to whether or not the federal government shall or shall not announce an embargo on grain plays a most important part. The opponents of such a measure, amongst which may be numbered the *World*, the New York *Times*, the New York *Evening Post*, the *Journal of Commerce*, the Boston *Evening Transcript*, the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, the Pittsburgh *Post*, the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, the Indianapolis *News*, together with many others, state that the position of those who support the idea of an embargo, whose fundamental purpose is to strike a blow at the Allies, is painted in far more threatening colors than the facts justify. The *World* endeavors to comfort its readers with the remark that the high cost of living was America's contribution to the cost of the greatest war of destruction that the world has ever known, while the New York *Times* announces the danger of estranging the Allies by an embargo. The newspapers which are friendly to Germany, particularly the Hearst papers and Milwaukee *Free Press*, call loudly for a general embargo on food products, in the course of which they more or less openly suggest that the adoption of such measures would force England to sue for peace. But there are also a number of Germany's most bitter opponents who base their call for an early embargo on purely practical grounds, for instance the Philadelphia *Inquirer*. It remains to be seen whether or not this matter will be one of the first to come up for discussion at the opening of the impending Congress, by which time the battle which is being carried on in the press by the opponents of the embargo, undoubtedly with the fundamental purpose of protecting the interests of England and its allies, should reach its climax. . . .

BERNSTORFF.

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 174.

In connection with No. 171.

BERLIN, January 27, 1917.

We shall hand to Gerard the following note on the evening of the 31st of the month:

Your Excellency had the kindness to impart to me on the 22d instant the message which the President of the United States of America sent to the American Senate on the same day. The Imperial Government has given it the earnest consideration which the representations of the President, emanating from his high sense of responsibility, demand. The Imperial Government learns with the greatest satisfaction that the basic trend of this important announcement agrees in general with the fundamental principles and desires recognized and entertained by Germany itself. Foremost among the former stand the principles of the right of self-determination and of equality of rights among nations; and the German Government would derive the most sincere satisfaction from seeing peoples like those of Ireland and India, who do not enjoy the blessings of national independence, from now on receive their freedom in recognition of these principles.

The German people also look with disfavor upon coalitions whose effect is to urge nations to compete for the acquisition of power and which end in their entanglement in a net of self-seeking intrigue. On the contrary, its cheerful cooperation in all efforts devoted to the avoidance of war in the future may be relied upon with certainty. The freedom of the seas, as a condition essential to the free existence and peaceful intercourse between nations has, like the open door policy for commerce between nations, been consistently included among the leading principles of German policy.

And the Imperial Government regrets all the more deeply that the hostile attitude of its opponents has made it impossible to set in motion the machinery to effect these lofty aims. Germany and her associates were ready to enter upon peace negotiations immediately, and had designated, as the basis therefor adequate guarantees of the existence, honor and liberty of development of their peoples. As they distinctly stated in the note of December 12, 1916, it was not their purpose to bring about the ruin or destruction of their opponents; and, according to their convictions, their plans were wholly consistent with the rights of other nations. With regard to Belgium, in particular, which is the subject of warm-hearted sympathy in the United States, it had already been made the subject of an announcement by the Imperial Chancellor a few weeks ago, to the effect that Germany had never intended the incorporation of Belgium into the German Empire. All that Germany wanted to accomplish in connection with the peace to be concluded with Belgium was to provide that the Belgian State, with which Germany

desires to live in kindly, neighborly relations, should not be used by Germany's opponents for the furtherance of enemy plans. Such precautionary measures are all the more urgently necessary because the leaders among our foes have in the course of repeated announcements, and particularly in the resolutions of the Paris Economic Conference, fully and frankly declared the intention of not recognizing Germany, even after the restoration of peace, as entitled to equal rights with themselves, but rather as a nation against which a systematic commercial war is to be carried on.

The attempt made by the four Associated Powers to bring about peace was brought to naught by the lust for conquest on the part of our opponents, who wish the peace to be of their own dictation. Under the guise of applying the principle of nationality, they reveal their desire to dismember and degrade Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria. To our desire for conciliation they oppose their lust for extermination. They desire to carry the fight through to the bitter end. Thus a new situation has come into being which, in its turn, has forced Germany to adopt new plans. For the past two years and a half, England has abused her naval power in the iniquitous attempt to force Germany to surrender through starvation. In brutal contempt of the principles of international law, the Associated Powers, acting under England's lead, are not only tying the hands of their opponents with regard to legitimate commerce; by the exercise of reckless pressure they are also forcing neutral States either to give up lines of commerce which do not suit their convenience or to limit themselves in the way of trade to their arbitrary dictates. The American people are well acquainted with the efforts made to persuade England and her allies to return to the observance of international law and, above all, to the recognition of the principle of the freedom of the seas. The British Government still continues to carry on its war of starvation which, as a matter of fact, does not effect the armed forces of her opponents, but forces women and children as well as the sick and aged to suffer, for the sake of their country, painful privations which jeopardize the peoples' strength. In this way the British ambition for conquest continues with an unfeeling heart to pile up the miseries of the world, unmoved by every consideration of humanity, careless of the protests of the heavily-burdened neutrals, and careless even of the unspoken desire for peace entertained by the peoples of their allies. Each day by which the terrible struggle is prolonged brings new desolation, new privations, and new death. Each day by which the duration of the war would be shortened would result for both sides in the saving of thousands of lives of brave men and would be a blessing for tortured humanity.

The Imperial Government, therefore, would not be able to answer to its own conscience, to the German people, or to history, if it should leave any stone unturned whereby the end of the war might be hastened. It had hoped to be able to reach this consummation through negotiations with

the President of the United States. Since the attempt to reach an understanding has been answered by our opponents by a still curter challenge to combat, the Imperial Government, wishing to promote the welfare of humanity in the highest sense and unwilling to play false to its associates, is forced to continue this fight for its existence which has been forced upon it, by the use, from now on, of all arms to the full extent of their efficacy. But for this purpose it is also essential for it to act in disregard of those restrictions which, up to the present time, it has placed on the use of those of its instrumentalities adapted to naval warfare.

Believing that the American people and the American Government will not deny the validity of the grounds of this resolution, and of its necessity, the Imperial Government expresses the hope that the United States will do justice to the new situation from the lofty standpoint of impartiality, and will also do what it can to prevent further misery and unnecessary sacrifice of human lives.

In referring to the attached memorial for details of the proposed war measures to be adopted for naval warfare, I avail myself of this opportunity (etc.).

Your Excellency will likewise deliver to the American Government the note in question on the evening of the 31st of January. Be good enough to take up the technical details in the supplementary memorial attached hereto, as explained in telegrams Nos. 157, 164, and 171. In telegram No. 157, substitute "will warn with reference to all" for "with reference to hostile." The relief commission in Brussels will be informed on the 31st of January that its humane work will not be interfered with, that such ships as they are operating and as are under way, if at once informed, will be able to leave the restricted area by the most direct route, or may avoid it altogether, but that other ships will have to pursue a course outside of the restricted area. Immediate acknowledgment of receipt requested.

ZIMMERMANN.

Wilson's message to the Senate is meeting with general approval and is looked upon as an additional energetic step in the direction of peace. It is only such of our opponents as are quite savage who are again denouncing the President as pro-German. Almost without exception, in articles com-

menting on the message, the wish is expressed that now the Central Powers will also feel called upon to announce their peace conditions. House requested me with equal insistence to bring this about, either publicly or confidentially. In such case, Wilson would at once propose a peace conference. Moreover, the President seems inclined to conclude a Bryan treaty with us. Unfortunately time is now too short; otherwise a treaty might perhaps have enabled us to prevent war.

It is to be presumed that the peace movement will come to a complete standstill as the result of the unrestricted U-boat war which is proposed. At the same time, it is possible that Wilson will redouble his efforts for peace, if a breathing spell is granted. I should like to leave nothing undone in the effort to prevent war with the United States. As I understand it, our refusal to announce our peace conditions is based on the assumption that they would be looked upon as too moderate by the public opinion of our country. Would it not perhaps be possible before beginning the unrestricted U-boat warfare, to announce the peace terms which we would have laid before the peace conference which we had in contemplation, and to state in addition that, in view of the insolent rejection on the part of our enemies, we were now no longer in a position to propose these moderate conditions? That might include the possibility of adding that we, as conquerors, would demand the independence of Ireland. Such an announcement would win over public opinion on this side, at least as far as it would be possible to win it over, and might possibly satisfy German public opinion as well.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 28, 1917.
Telegram No. 60.

WASHINGTON, January 26, 1917.

Your 157 most urgent! After having had very important conference, request most urgently postponement until my next two messages received. Suggest reply by wireless.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 28, 1917.

Telegram No. 239.

In connection with No. 120

and No. 238.

WASHINGTON, January 27, 1917.

House asked me of his own accord and on Wilson's behalf to call upon him and gave me the following message from the President, stating it to be official: Wilson offers in the first place, in confidence, peace mediation based on his message to the Senate, that is, without interfering in the matter of the territorial conditions of peace. He said that Wilson did not consider as confidential his request, simultaneously addressed to us, for a disclosure of our peace conditions.

House related to me in detail the following line of reasoning of the President: That our enemies had publicly announced their peace conditions, which were impossible of acceptance; that, in direct opposition to this, the President had thereupon announced his program; that from now on we too were under the moral obligation of disclosing our peace conditions, because, otherwise, our intentions with regard to peace would not be looked upon as genuine; that after your Excellency had informed Mr. Wilson that our peace conditions were of a moderate nature and that we were willing to enter upon the second peace conference, the President was of the opinion that his message to the Senate was in accordance with our views; that Wilson hoped that we would disclose peace conditions to him which could be made public both here and in Germany, in order that they could become openly known throughout the entire world; that if we would only trust him, he was convinced that he would be able to bring about both peace conferences; that he would be particularly pleased if at the same time your Excellency would be willing to state that we were prepared to enter upon the conferences on the basis of his message to the Senate; that the reason for our announcement could be explained by the fact that Wilson had now asked us directly for our peace conditions. The President was of the opinion that the Entente note to him was a bluff and, for this reason, need not be taken into consideration; that he hoped with reason to be able to bring about peace conferences and, indeed, at such an early date that unnecessary bloodshed in the spring offensive could be avoided. To what extent your Excellency is willing or is able to meet Wilson can not be judged from this side. In the meantime, I urgently beg leave to make the following suggestion: If the U-boat war is commenced forthwith, the President will look upon this as a slap in the face, and war with the United States will be unavoidable. The war party on this side will gain the upper hand, and we shall not be able, in my opinion, to tell when the war will end, since the

resources of the United States are, in spite of all statements to the contrary, very great. On the other hand, if we meet Wilson's proposition and if, in spite of that fact, these plans are brought to naught by the obstinacy of our opponents, it will be a very difficult thing for the President to undertake a war against us, even if we were then to start the unrestricted U-boat warfare. Thus, at the present, all we need is a brief delay in order to improve our diplomatic position. In any event, my view of the situation is that at this time we can get a better peace by means of conferences than if the United States should join our enemies.

Since cablegrams invariably take more than a few days, I ask to be informed by return wireless if telegraphic dispatch 157 is not to be carried out on the first of February.

BERNSTORFF.

70

Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 63.

Reply to No. 60.

BERLIN, January 29, 1917.

Regret postponement impracticable.

V. STUMM.

71

Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 64.

Urgent.

BERLIN, January 29, 1917.

Answer to your telegram No. 239 of January 27 will be sent immediately via Eilvese-Tuckerton in same cipher as your telegram 239.

V. STUMM.

72

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 65.

Answer to No. 239.

BERLIN, January 29, 1917.

Kindly express the thanks of the Imperial Government to the President for his communication. We offer him our full confidence, and ask him to give us his in return. Germany is ready to accept the mediation which he

offers in confidence for the purpose of bringing about a direct conference of the belligerents, and will recommend the same to its associates. We ask that our acceptance be regarded as strictly confidential, as was the proposal.

The public disclosure of our peace conditions is now impossible, since the Entente has publicly announced peace conditions pointing to the degradation and destruction of Germany and its associates, which have been characterized by the President himself as impossible. We can not look upon them as being in the nature of a bluff, since they are in entire accord with the utterances of the enemy authorities, not only before, but after their publication, and fit in exactly with the purposes for which Italy and Roumania entered the war; and, moreover, so far as Turkey is concerned, correspond to the assurances made by England and France to Russia in treaty form. As long as these war aims of our opponents continue to be freely and frankly maintained, the public disclosure of our peace conditions would be inadvisable, inasmuch as it would indicate a weakness which does not exist, and would only lead to a prolongation of the war. In order to give President Wilson a proof of our confidence in him, we inform him herewith, but absolutely for his own personal information, of the conditions under which we *would have been* willing to enter into peace negotiations in case the Entente had accepted our peace proposal of December 12 of last year:

Restitution of that part of upper Alsace now occupied by France.

The obtaining of a boundary which would protect Germany and Poland against Russia, strategically and economically.

The restitution of our colonies in the form of an understanding which would assure to Germany such colonial possessions as are adapted to her population and the importance of her economic interests.

The return of French territory occupied by Germany, under reservations concerning the establishment of strategic and economic boundaries, as well as financial compensation.

The restoration of Belgium under certain guarantees assuring Germany's safety, which would have to be reached by negotiations with the Belgian Government.

An economic and financial adjustment on the basis of an interchange of the territory conquered by both sides which is to be returned on the conclusion of peace.

Indemnification of German undertakings and private persons who have been injured by the war.

The renunciation of all economic agreements and measures which would, after the establishment of peace, interfere with normal trade and commerce. Agreements on this point to be concluded in the form of commercial treaties covering the subject.

Guarantee of the freedom of the seas.

The peace conditions of our associates are in due proportion to and in agreement with our views.

We are further prepared to take part in the international conference which President Wilson is seeking to bring about after the termination of the war, on the basis of his message to the Senate.

Your Excellency will deliver this communication to the President at the time that you hand over the note regarding the intensive U-boat warfare, and will accompany this with the following announcement:

If his proposal had only been made a few days earlier, we would have been able to put off the commencement of the new U-boat war; inform him that, at the present time, in spite of the best will in the world, it is, unfortunately, too late on account of technical reasons, since far-reaching military preparations have been decided upon from which we are no longer in a position to recede, and because the U-boats have already left port with new instructions. That the form and the contents of the enemy's note answering our peace proposal and the note of the President were so blunt that, in view of the newly-announced fight for life and death, we could no longer delay putting to full account those instrumentalities of warfare best adapted to a rapid termination of the war, nor have been able to answer to our own people for our failure to do so.

As is to be observed in the instructions governing the intensive U-boat warfare, we are always ready to do justice to the necessities of the United States as far as in any way possible. We beg the President, in spite of all, to take up and continue his efforts; and we declare ourselves perfectly ready to discontinue the intensive U-boat warfare as soon as we receive satisfactory assurances that the efforts of the President will lead to a peace which would be acceptable to us.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

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Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 30, 1917.

Telegram No. 238.

WASHINGTON, January 26, 1917.

Wilson proposed officially but at the same time confidentially peace mediation upon the same basis as his message to the Senate, that is, without any interference in the territorial conditions of peace. Wilson does not regard as confidential his request for a disclosure of our peace conditions, announced at the same time.

I wired in detail through the State Department. The commencement of the U-boat war without preliminary negotiations with regard to the above proposals would, in my opinion, put us absolutely in the wrong and make the avoidance of a break impossible on account of personal affront to Wilson.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. Berlin, February 15, 1917.

Contents: Political situation.

WASHINGTON, January 14, 1917.

The political situation has not changed here since the presidential election. Nothing has claimed the serious attention of public opinion for any length of time except the question of the termination of the World War.

Congress is arranging the usual budget estimates and the fruitless negotiations concerning the Mexican question are dragging slowly along.

In the meantime, that improvement in public opinion which started at the time of the *Sussex* incident, has continued gradually to manifest itself. This changed attitude may be recognized at every turn. It is true that one finds it expressed in the press very little if at all, and our most violent opponents have been spurred on to still sharper attacks against us because of this general improvement in German-American relations. In particular, since President Wilson delivered his peace note, the rage of our opponents has exceeded all bounds. It may be stated without exaggeration that this note meets with the approval of almost the entire American people. It is only Wall Street and the anti-German ring and their hangers-on in the press who are dissatisfied and attempt to place obstacles in the President's way. The opinion has become general in those circles, which are always being influenced by England, that President Wilson has come under German influence. The well-known anti-German Republican Senator Lodge announced this view in the Senate without the slightest hesitation, but was not by this means able to prevent the Senate from indorsing Mr. Wilson's peace note by a great majority.

Public opinion is mainly occupied with the consideration of the question as to why the President sent his note immediately following the German peace proposal. It is well known that the note had been prepared for quite awhile and would have been sent at Christmas time, irrespective of any move on our part, although this is not so absolutely certain, if we take into consideration the hesitating character of Mr. Wilson, whose inclination is to handle all questions in a dilatory manner. I believe that the President's impelling motive was his urgent wish to assume the rôle of intermediary—a prospect which, it would seem, would have been jeopardized if our enemies had undertaken to enter upon direct negotiations with us. The selection of the moment, which was taken in very bad grace by our enemies, so far as Mr. Wilson was concerned, is explained by the existence of this impelling motive. A cartoon in the paper which is most hostile to Germany, the *New York Herald*, portrays Mr. Wilson's dove of peace as a parrot repeating the German propositions in its chatter.

Quite aside from the selection of the moment, the President's wish to

bring about peace is very easily explained, as it was mainly on this platform that he was reelected. Moreover, the increase of the power of the Japanese in the Far East is beginning to bother the Americans, and, finally, Mr. Wilson has become positively convinced, since our Roumanian victories, that our enemies can never conquer us. One constantly hears the view expressed by members of the Cabinet and by others of the President's friends who are in his confidence, that neither of the two belligerent Powers can now succeed in gaining a decisive victory, and that further bloodshed is absolutely useless.

As already stated, the anti-German party is attempting in every way to place obstacles in Mr. Wilson's path. Time and again it has announced in the press that the peace note must be interpreted as a threat against Germany. By doing this, it is hoped to stiffen our enemies and at the same time to keep before their eyes the hope of the entrance of the United States into the war. And this argument, too, was used to a great extent, particularly in the Senate, that an intervention on the part of Wilson would jeopardize the traditional policy of the United States, the fundamental precept of which was the Monroe Doctrine and the avoidance of European entanglements. Finally, a sordid attempt was made by the Republican Party to stay Mr. Wilson's hand, in that a notorious speculator by the name of Lawson was induced to make the public accusation that members of the administration had speculated in the market on the basis of knowledge obtained in advance of Wilson's move. But since Lawson could not submit any proofs, he simply made a laughing-stock of himself. I have already pointed to the fact on numerous occasions in the course of my report, that the long-drawn-out war hysteria has created an atmosphere of gossip over here to an extent which, formerly, one would have considered absolutely impossible. For instance, even serious people entertain the belief that I have obtained possession, for a consideration, of compromising private letters of Wilson's in order to have a hold on him through them. Senator Lodge has [omission ?] this report in private conversation at his home, as deserving of credence, and has even touched upon it in the Senate. The President is so worked up about these and similar machinations on the part of the Republicans, who do not wish to concede to him the glory of the peacemaker, that he absented himself from a public ceremony a short while ago because Mr. Lodge was the leading speaker on that occasion.

On account of the incredible rumors which are being spread broadcast in this country, I considered it necessary to bring the notorious swindler and blackmailer Graves before the courts. I wanted to convince the public that the Embassy had nothing to fear. It is my purpose to proceed in this way in cases of this kind now that we have made a clean slate of all compromising questions. But, nevertheless, our enemies will continue to leave no stone unturned in their effort to compromise the Embassy in some way,

for their main efforts are now, as formerly, concentrated in the endeavor to bring about my recall or the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Germany. If they can only succeed in bringing this last about, they are convinced that it will be an easy thing for them to drag the United States into the war.

BERNSTORFF.

PART II.—ORIGIN OF THE PEACE PROPOSAL OF THE
CENTRAL POWERS OF DECEMBER 12, 1916

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*Notes in the handwriting of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg:
Suggestion of Baron Burian for the announcement of a peace proposal*

BERLIN, October 18, 1916.

Baron Burian submitted the following to me yesterday in Pless:

If, with the beginning of the winter, a pause should occur in the course of the great offensive of our enemies, and the Roumanian campaign should have reached a definite conclusion, we would make the effort to bring about a termination of the war without the sacrifice of interests which are essential to our existence. If the war should continue, we would, in the following year, be confronted with a still greater offensive on the part of our enemies than that of this summer. Even if we should defend ourselves victoriously against it, by doing so we should not force our enemies to sue for peace, but we ourselves would be approximating the stage of exhaustion, that is, we should be in a worse position than we are now. The responsibility with regard to our own countries, he said, would therefore force us to ourselves take a step in the direction of peace. He suggested the following method:

We should not invoke either one or all of the neutral Powers to offer peace mediation, because such an arrangement would probably encounter an attitude on the part of the intermediary not altogether favorable to us. What we should do is to request the neutral Powers to exercise their good offices in submitting to our enemies on our account a peace proposal expressed in definite terms. This request should be directed to all neutrals, America, Spain, Switzerland, Holland, and the Scandinavian States, and should be made publicly, simultaneously, and in the same terms. He said that the Pope, being no true sovereign prince, and in that sense not in the same position as the neutral States, should be made a participant by analogous action.

Reasonable peace conditions would, he said, result in turning the sympathy of the neutrals in our direction, and would so strengthen the desire

for peace, which undoubtedly was felt by all the enemy nations, that the hostile governments would be obliged to yield to their influence, and thereby so strengthen the morale of our own country that our people too, if peace did not follow, would resolve to hold out to the very end.

That no disadvantage worthy of the name appeared to exist to outweigh these advantages. To be sure, the chauvinists would brand a peace concluded on such grounds as an act of cowardice and a sacrifice of the successes which had been won at the cost of the blood of our armies. But that, as far as these people were concerned, we could never satisfy them, and, too, they only constituted a minority to whose ravings no responsible statesman would pay particular attention. The great mass of the people, at least in the monarchy, would, in the last analysis, accept such a peace with enthusiasm. But if our enemies should reject our peace proposal the fact that we had made it, after the war had been carried on for so long, could hardly be weighed in the balance against us any longer as a sign of weakness; and even the disadvantage which might result from this feature would be fully counterbalanced by favorable reactions which we might expect on the part of the neutrals, the pacifists in the ranks of our enemies, and our own population.

The great difficulty, of course, would consist in making our peace conditions concrete in form. Considered in their application to our enemies, they would have to be the most that we could expect to obtain, and in their application to our own people, the least that we could expect to yield; and from both points of view they would have to be so drawn up as to be considered a proposal based on the rule of reason when submitted to the scrutiny of a fair judgment, untouched by the psychology of war.

He, Baron Burian, had worked out the peace proposal for himself more or less along the following lines, by which of course he had no intention of anticipating the German conception in any way.

1. Complete territorial integrity of the four associated Powers.
2. Return of the German colonies.
3. Complete integrity of French territory.
4. Restoration of Belgium as a sovereign State under guarantees of Germany's legitimate interests. (These interests would remain to be defined.)
5. Incorporation of the Congo State into Germany.
6. Strategic improvement of the Italian boundary: (That is only a question of individual barren mountains and consequently does not constitute annexation. Eventually, Baron Burian seemed ready to concede to mutual modifications of the boundary line.)
7. Recognition of the Kingdom of Poland.
8. Strategic boundary modifications in favor of Germany and against Russia (Courland and Lithuania to be included in this), and in favor of Austria-Hungary (this last quite negligible).
9. Strategic boundary modifications against Roumania, with par-

ticular reference to the Iron Gate where the Danubian Monarchy must be master in its own house and perhaps also at the Bistritza valley. (Hindenburg had set this last down as necessary.)

10. Increase of Bulgarian territory to the extent of the occupied parts of Serbia and of the Dobrudja.

11. Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia upon the surrender of the territorial subdivisions designated in 10 to Bulgaria, northern and northwestern districts to Austria-Hungary and Albanian districts to Albania. (It is Baron Burian's desire to make far-reaching concessions to Russia in the Serbian question if Russia should so desire, even if it becomes necessary to agree to the continuance of the Karageorgevitch dynasty. He personally wants to demand Matshwa and Belgrade, but will give way on the matter of Belgrade if Russia so desires. For the purpose of appeasing Bulgaria, which really wants to see Serbia disappear entirely from the face of the earth, he would be inclined to concede it still more territory than that which has been mentioned; he would even go so far as to include Valona, where he would rather see Bulgarians than Italians. As even Hungary has by this time finally realized, Serbia must, on account of economic advantages, be closely connected with the Danubian Monarchy.)

12. Restoration of the Kingdom of Montenegro, upon condition of the cession of certain territorial subdivisions to Austria-Hungary and Albania. (A question as to whether it were better not to mention Montenegro at all.)

13. Independence of Albania under an Austrian protectorate.

14. The discontinuance of all capitulations in Turkey and their substitution by international treaties based on reciprocity.

15. Carrying out of the wishes of Russia with regard to rights of passage through the straits. (As Baron Burian believes recently to have established on reliable authority, the Entente Powers, in April, 1915, had promised Russia the following by treaty stipulation: Territorial ownership of Constantinople, of both shores of the Bosphorus, with the Hinterland, including Eregli and the Prince islands, the western shore of the Dardanelles, the Gallipoli Hinterland up to Enos Midia, the partition of Asia Minor, Armenia to Russia, Mesopotamia to England, the French and Italian booty not yet clearly set out. An Arabian State to be constructed by England from Arabia and Syria. The future of Palestine as yet undefined.)

16. The restoration of the territorial integrity of Greece.

17. The renunciation on the part of our enemies of all agreements which stand in the way of the restoration of normal relations of trade and commerce with the enemy Powers and the neutral Powers. Freedom of the seas.

Baron Burian does not care to demand any war indemnity. In any case, it would be rejected by our enemies as humiliating and if it were to be of any real benefit would have to be so enormous as to be practically unattainable. It is possible that some formula might be found which, without mentioning the words "war indemnities," might include commercial advantages, financial indemnities, etc.

Emperor Francis Joseph agrees with these propositions. Baron Burian has not had a final conference with his Supreme High Command of the Army. He asks that we in turn express our views. Were we to agree with him, we would have to obtain in conference the agreement of Turkey and Bulgaria and have our peace proposal in a state of complete preparedness so that at the psychological moment it could be submitted to the neutrals at once for transmission by them to our opponents.

I answered in a perfectly non-committal manner, expressing nothing but my personal views, that I had been earnestly pursuing the same train of thought for a long time; that I recognized the correctness of many of the arguments which were brought forward, but that of course I could not go into the question of the details of the peace negotiations, and postponed answering at greater length until some future time.

Baron Burian felt that a separate peace with Russia would be absolutely out of the question, and that the most that we could possibly expect on the part of Russia might be her willingness to exercise pressure on her friends of the Entente in the direction of peace; that for the moment Russia was a perfect sphinx to him.

That, besides, America had been very insistent about the early appointment of an Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to Washington; that a safe-conduct had already been granted, and that the Cabinet at Vienna was in hourly expectation of the agreement which had been requested concerning the individual to be so designated, who would arrive in Washington about the middle of November. I have already made a confidential report of our estimate and treatment of the American situation.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

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Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Wedel, Vienna
Telegram No. 791.

BERLIN, November 1, 1916.

I request your Excellency to be good enough to see that the accompanying telegram of His Majesty the Emperor is confidentially placed in the hands of His Majesty Emperor Francis Joseph:

TO HIS MAJESTY EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH.

A short time ago, acting with your approval, Baron Burian made the suggestion to the Imperial Chancellor that at a given time we should submit a peace proposal to our enemies. In view of the present situation, I consider this proposition, concerning which the Imperial Chancellor has expressed his views to me, as thoroughly tenable.

There is a difference of opinion between our two premiers on two points: first, with regard to the time of this peace proposal; secondly, concerning its form. While Baron Burian entertains the opinion that we should wait a few weeks or months, until, say, the commencement of the winter interval, the Imperial Chancellor—and I fully agree with him in his view—believes that the psychological moment will have arrived immediately after the Balkan campaign of the Entente is seen to be fruitless as the result of the military operations against Roumania.

Were we to wait for eventual and still greater successes, for instance the taking of Bucharest, it is very likely that an indefinite period of time would elapse in the process. Our enemies would in the meantime have accustomed themselves to the thought of the winter campaign, and the chances that they would agree to a peace proposal would be less than they are now. If, at the present time, they reject a peace proposal submitted by us, our people would be all the more willing to devote their last efforts to continuing the conflict to its victorious end. On the other hand, our military situation, the deep disappointment resulting from our victorious advance into Roumania, the increasing effect of the U-boat war, together with the bad harvest in England, America and Russia, are all such unfavorable factors for the Entente that, in view of the war weariness of their peoples, it would be a very serious matter for the hostile Governments unqualifiedly to reject a peace proposal. Therefore, I believe that the proposal should be made as soon as possible, and before the commencement of the winter campaign.

The danger that our peace proposal would be looked upon as an indication of weakness is a situation to which, in my opinion, we shall be the less exposed if we announce our proclamation for Poland beforehand and show the world in this way that we regard ourselves as conquerors. A certain length of time between the proclamation and a peace proposal will, in any case, be necessary.

Baron Burian further takes the ground that concrete conditions should accompany the proposal, that is, those conditions on which we would be willing to conclude peace, whereas the Imperial Chancellor feels that so public a statement of our desire for peace would entail certain risks, to which I likewise am unable to close my eyes. It is always difficult for a nation participating in a war of coalition to reach an agreement in advance with its associated Powers—with Bulgaria and Turkey—with regard to all the details of a plan. But we would find ourselves in a difficult position for another reason. If we were to set out our maximum demands, we would make it all the easier for our enemies to reject them. They might answer that they were not in the position possibly to undertake to negotiate such conditions. Were we to present them, on the contrary, in the form of a minimum, we would tie our hands in advance and would presumably find ourselves in a position of having to make further concessions in the course

of the negotiations. We should therefore, in my opinion, go no further in the matter of definitions concerning the basis of negotiations than to state that we are desirous of securing the existence, the liberty of development and the future of our people—not in a war of conquest, but in a war of self-defense—and that this demand could not be considered as standing in opposition to the recognition of equal rights existing in other nations. In my opinion, a peace proposal put forward on such grounds would insure us the agreement and sympathetic attitude of all the neutrals.

Since, as experience has shown, negotiations between our Governments are attended with great and useless delays, much time might be lost in these discussions. But if we desire to take the step set out above, the ground therefor would have to be carefully prepared by getting into immediate and cautious touch with our Turkish and Bulgarian allies, since this getting in touch and the reaching of an understanding will under all circumstances take time. Of course, this would have to be postponed until we reached a decision between ourselves, but time presses.

Since this situation is one of most personal interest to me, and since I would like to treat all questions which have so close a bearing upon the fate of both our kingdoms in absolute cooperation with you, I have thought it proper to personally lay before you my views at this critical moment. I would be very grateful to you if you would submit them to a friendly criticism and let me have your opinion on the subject.

In true friendship,

WILHELM.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

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Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, November 4, 1916.

Telegram No. 891.

Confidential.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),

November 4, 1916.

For his Excellency the Imperial Chancellor:

His Majesty telegraphs your Excellency as follows:

Yesterday I took up with the Field Marshal and Ludendorff the question of the "mobilization of the German people."

After sharp opposition at the beginning of the interview, I finally convinced his Excellency that it would be more proper, politically speaking, to have it occur after the great action, even if we can not wait for the eventual answer of the enemy Powers. The Field Marshal wants the proposal to be so made that by the end of November we shall already have obtained the workmen and shall have been able to take up the munitions work on a

great scale. For this reason, no more time is to be lost: I therefore think it advisable to send a copy of my telegram to the Emperor, to the Sultan and to Ferdinand, with the necessary changes in form, so that the gentlemen will have time to get a clear idea of the situation and to avoid the repetition of a loss of time in that quarter. For, without our cooperation, Vienna will secretly get into touch with them. The Field Marshal is in full accord with me on the point of the announcement through me to the world of the origin and causes for the peace proposal—to the belligerents and to all neutral Powers. I also finally succeeded in overcoming the objections to the wording of the Poland proclamation. Beseler, who is quite in accord with me with regard to this, came here yesterday for the final polish and arrangements. His spirits are good and he is full of hope. Thick fog here.

WILHELM I. R.

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*Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to General Field Marshal
v. Hindenburg*

BERLIN, November 4, 1916.

Baron Burian is now giving up his original opposition to the form of the peace move suggested by us and realizes that it is necessary to set in motion the preliminary steps for carrying it out, particularly the confidential sounding-out of our Bulgarian and Turkish associates; but first of all he would like to reach an agreement between Vienna and Berlin on the question of the peace conditions to be submitted by us. In my opinion, our conditions should for the present be stated in only the most general way and should be communicated to Vienna with the same reservations, as a detailed presentation would seem to me to be feasible only in connection with the progress of the negotiations and in proportion to what seem to be attainable. I would suggest that our conditions might be stated more or less as follows:

1. Recognition of the kingdom of Poland.
2. A fixing of the boundary on the east by the annexation of territory of Courland and Lithuania (and above all Suwalki) in such a way that, including the future kingdom of Poland, a good strategic frontier against Russia will be obtained extending from north to south.
3. Guarantees in Belgium which, if possible, are to be established as a result of negotiations with King Albert. In case sufficient guarantees should not be obtained, the annexation of a strip of territory including Liège for the protection of our industrial region on the west.
4. Evacuation of the French occupied territory, with the exception of Briey and Longwy, in return for eventual war indemnities or compensation. (For the moment, I prefer not to discuss any eventual

delimitation of boundaries by means of Alsace-Lorraine boundary strips.)

5. Return of the colonies, with the exception of Kiaochow, the Carolines, and the Mariana islands, under a general agreement as to colonies.

I should be obliged to your Excellency for an expression of opinion with regard to this general program at your earliest convenience.

Baron Burian lately submitted to me the conditions of Austria-Hungary in the following form:

1. Integrity of the Monarchy.
2. Slight modifications of the boundary against Russia.
3. Strategic boundary modifications against Roumania (of the Iron Gate and possibly also the valley of the Bistritza).
4. Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia, involving the following cession:
 - (a) The territory promised to Bulgaria;
 - (b) The Albanian territory to Albania;
 - (c) The Matshwa and Belgrade to Austria-Hungary. In order to satisfy Bulgaria, Baron Burian will possibly concede it more territory than is contained in that above referred to. The restored remainder of Serbia is to be closely connected with the Monarchy from the economic point of view.
5. Restoration of the kingdom of Montenegro, involving the cession of certain tracts of territory to Austria-Hungary and Albania.
6. Establishment of an independent Albania under an Austrian protectorate.
7. Strategic boundary modifications against Italy, which simply involve isolated and barren mountains, and therefore do not amount to an annexation. When I called the Minister's attention to the fact that the Italians were now almost entirely engaged in fighting on Austrian territory, he seemed to become reconciled to the idea of mutual concessions.

He was not inclined to concede Valona to the Italians.

The Austrian wishes appear to me to be in part somewhat ambitious, and it is particularly to be questioned, in my opinion, as to whether or not the Russians will agree to the return of the whole of East Galicia and of the Bukowina.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, November 6, 1916.

Telegram No. 895.

Confidential.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
November 5, 1916.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE IMPERIAL CHANCELOR:

General Field Marshal submits following answer to the telegram of your Excellency of yesterday.

I agree with the fundamental conceptions of the peace move, provided it is undertaken after the contemplated acceptance of the *Hilfsarbeitsgesetz* has been announced in solemn form. That we can not afford to delay in the matter of this law, is made obvious by the necessity of obtaining workmen at once.

I agree to the following peace conditions:

1. Recognition of the kingdom of Poland. Boundary modifications of the Prussian frontier to our advantage on the Polish side. The establishment of an economic connection between Poland and Germany, decided interest in the railroad system, and other economic advantages in Poland.

2. Delimitation of frontiers on the east by annexation up to the line Gulf of Riga to the west of Riga, passing Vilna to the east in the direction Brest-Litovsk. Hereby, and with the inclusion of the kingdom of Poland, we shall gain a good strategic frontier against Russia, running from north to south.

3. Guarantees in Belgium. Absorption of the mineral wealth of the Campine. Economic connection with Germany, taking over of the railroad system. Right of occupation. I am absolutely in agreement with having the negotiations taken up with King Albert personally. The annexation of Liège with corresponding stretches of territory if right of occupation is not granted to a satisfactory extent. War indemnification.

4. Evacuation of the French occupied territory, with the exception of the coal districts of Briey and Longwy, in return for evacuation of the territory in Alsace on the part of the French in consideration of deferred war indemnities and compensations. In my opinion, we can not undertake to discuss any delimitation of boundaries in favor of France, and, on the contrary, such delimitations of boundaries in connection with Alsace and Lorraine are to be considered in our own interest.

5. Return of the colonies, with the exception of Kiaochow, the Carolines, and the Mariana islands, in connection with the general understanding with regard to colonies. Acquisition of the Congo State.

6. Luxemburg to take her place as a member of the German Confederation of States.

7. Indemnification of Germans residing abroad.

With regard to the conditions of Austria-Hungary, I agree with the views concerning the Balkan peninsula. The extension of the territory of Bulgaria at the expense of Serbia will facilitate the acquiescence

on the part of Bulgaria to return Kavala and those frontier areas which were taken away from Turkey at the beginning of the war. Valona should be turned over to Greece, if possible.

Austria-Hungary must be satisfied with the reestablishment of the boundaries of Italy and Russia, in view of the advantages gained by it with regard to the Balkan peninsula. Perhaps it will be possible to get boundary adjustments for Austria-Hungary in Roumania (Iron Gate, Bistritza valley).

My counter-question with regard to the first sentence, which is in conflict with His Majesty's telegram No. 891, revealed the fact that there must be a misapprehension which can not for the moment be cleared up. In any event, General Ludendorff stands fast to his point of view and asked that the passage be submitted to your Excellency in this form.

With regard to point 3. What is meant is: war indemnification on the part of England for the surrender of Belgium.

With regard to point 4. It was impossible to find Longueville on any map. Therefore, Longwy was put down. By the adjustment of boundaries in Alsace-Lorraine is meant the setting back of the boundary to the western mountain slope.

General Ludendorff requests your Excellency to have telegrams of this kind sent through me, since they pass through too many hands in the General Staff and he can not undertake to guarantee that they will be given the appropriate secrecy. Aside from the above, I should have requested your Excellency to make use of me in this connection, as I am always put in a very embarrassing position with regard to the General Staff if I receive my first notification of events of the utmost importance from that organization.

GRÜNAU.

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau

Telegram No. 1553.

Re No. 895.

For General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg.

BERLIN, November 6, 1916.

With the exception of one point subsequently referred to, I agree with the detailed addenda made by your Excellency in connection with my general peace proposal. I believe that, by all means, our conditions should be communicated to Vienna only in quite summary form, just as Baron Burian has communicated with me only in a general way concerning his own proposal. Eventually, of course, another personal interview with Baron Burian regarding these questions will be necessary.

Concerning those war indemnifications which your Excellency refers to as desirable in the case of Belgium, I must express the belief that we could not undertake to include those in our program, for the following reasons: England, which, as is well known, has made use of the violation of Belgian neutrality as a pretext for war both before the world and before its own people, has already, on various occasions, demanded the "indemnification" of Belgium. Although I am not ready at this time to go into this phase of the question in any way, it is apparent that the demand on our part of a war indemnity would instantly bring negotiations to a deadlock. The release of Belgium, even if upon conditions, would serve as the consideration for the return of our colonies, almost all of which are now occupied by England. And in addition to this, we intend to demand the Congo State of Belgium. Finally, Belgium, up to the present time, has already paid us far more than a billion in the nature of war contributions and is continuing to pay even at present the further monthly amount of 40,000,000 which, presumably, will be increased to 50,000,000.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

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Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, November 7, 1916.

Telegram No. 909.

Answer to No. 1353.

For his Excellency the Imperial Chancellor.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),

November 7, 1916.

I am naturally of the opinion that our conditions should be communicated to Vienna only in general form. With regard to the war indemnity to be demanded of Belgium, we might be able to substitute therefor, substantial economic advantages. But in my opinion, it would become all the more essential that the monthly amount of 40,000,000, which at present is being paid by Belgium, should be increased to a very material extent and not merely by the sum of 10,000,000.

With regard to Russia, I may state that here too I look upon the acquisition of economic advantages as absolutely essential.

V. HINDENBURG.

GRÜNAU.

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau

Telegram No. 1360.

BERLIN, November 7, 1916.

Kindly submit to His Majesty the following telegram:

After having reached an agreement with regard to the main points of our peace conditions with the General Field Marshal, I most respectfully request the gracious permission of Your Majesty to submit these points in the following form to Baron Burian in the way of an answer to his communications on the same subject setting out the Austrian terms:

1. Recognition of the kingdom of Poland.
2. Annexation of the territory of Courland and Lithuania in such a way that, including the kingdom of Poland, a good strategic frontier against Russia will be obtained, extending from north to south.
3. Treaty of commerce with Russia and, in this connection, economic advantages.
4. Guarantees in Belgium which, if possible, are to be established as the result of negotiations with King Albert himself. In case sufficient guarantees should not be obtained, the annexation of Liège with corresponding areas.
5. Evacuation of the French occupied territory, with the exception of Briey and Longwy, in return for the evacuation of that portion of Alsace-Lorraine now occupied by the French, and strategic boundary adjustments for us in Alsace-Lorraine, as well as war indemnities or compensation.
6. Return of the colonies, with the exception of Kiaochow, the Carolines, and the Mariana islands, under a general understanding regarding colonial possessions; the acquisition of the Congo State or a part thereof.
7. Indemnification of Germans living abroad, and of German foreign possessions to the extent of damage done thereto.
8. Incorporation of Luxemburg into the German Empire. This would seem to be necessary in case of the acquisition by us of Briey and Longwy.

The intention is, of course, to communicate these conditions to the Cabinet at Vienna in strict confidence only; at the same time, I should be inclined to refrain from detail as much as possible, since the statements of Baron Burian were communicated to me only in very general terms.

I shall presumably, and in accordance with the wish expressed by Baron Burian, have a personal conference with him in the next few days for the purpose of taking up the peace move in question, and discussing the matters set out above.

With the expressions of the deepest respect,

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

83

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, November 8, 1916.

Telegram No. 917.

For his Excellency the Imperial Chancellor.

Answer to No. 1360.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
November 8, 1916.

His Majesty has expressed himself as consenting to the submission of the communications with regard to peace conditions to Baron Burian.

With regard to point 3, His Majesty observed that the mine concessions promised to England by Russia should be transferred to us.

GRÜNAU.

84

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, November 17, 1916.

Telegram No. 958.

Answer to Nos. 1403 and 1404.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
November 17, 1916.

Supreme High Command of the Army agrees with the changes in the text of the note, in which accord reached with Burian. Special acquiescence on the part of His Majesty not necessary, shall only report that changes in two places occurred after conference with Field Marshal.

GRÜNAU.

85

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Wedel

Telegram No. 460.

BERLIN, November 23, 1916.

Your Excellency receives herewith following documents for your strictly confidential information:

1. A statement of our war aims.
2. A statement of the Austro-Hungarian war aims.

No. 2 was handed to us by Baron Burian himself on the occasion of his last visit, whereas we provided him with No. 1.

Subsequently, however, points 8 and 9 bearing on Tsingtao and Greece, were added to No. 1. Your Excellency will inform Baron Burian of this and hand him a copy of draft 1.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Draft 1

1. Recognition of the new kingdom of Poland.
2. Cession of Courland and Lithuanian territories and the reconstruction of a common boundary of the German and Polish territory against Russia, based on strategic considerations.
3. Return of that part of Upper Alsace which is occupied by France.
4. Return of that part of French territory now occupied by us, reserving the right to strategic and economic frontier adjustments as well as frontier extensions and war indemnification.
5. Restoration of Belgium to her position as a sovereign State under certain guarantees for Germany which are to be established by negotiations with the King of the Belgians. In case these guarantees can not be made sufficiently inclusive, the annexation of Liège with corresponding areas.
6. The entrance of Luxemburg into the German Empire as an independent federate State.
7. The restoration of colonial possessions equivalent to those formerly in the possession of Germany—this to be done in the course of reaching a general understanding with regard to colonies (Belgian Congo).
8. The internationalization of Tsingtao.
9. The restoration of the territorial integrity of Greece, if it remains neutral. The frontier modifications in northern Epirus contemplated in connection with the neutrality of Greece.
10. Economic and financial interchanges based on the value of the territory which has been conquered by both sides and which is to be made the subject of restitution in the treaty of peace.
11. Indemnification of German citizens and German undertakings injured by measures taken by our enemies of a non-military nature.
12. The renunciation of any economic agreements or measures which would constitute an obstacle in the way of the resumption of trade and commerce in normal times between all countries, to be solemnized by treaties of trade and commerce dealing with the subject.
13. Freedom of the seas.
14. Guarantee of free navigation on the Lower Danube.

Draft 2 (strictly confidential)

Handed over by Baron Burian on the occasion of his visit in Berlin, November 15, 1916.

Sketch of the peace conditions to be submitted

1. Restoration in complete form of the territory of the four associated Powers as possessed by them before the war, together with evacuation on

the part of the enemy of East Galicia, the Bukowina, of the Coast and of South Tyrol, as well as of Alsace-Lorraine, Armenia, and Mesopotamia, and, finally, a restoration of the *status quo ante bellum* in Egypt and Cyprus.

2. In proportion to the contents of point 1, return of all the German colonies, with the exception of Kiaochow, the Carolines, and the Mariana islands, in connection with a general understanding with regard to colonies.

3. Acquisition on the part of Germany of the Congo State or of a part of the same.

4. Evacuation of the French occupied territory, with the exception of Briey and Longwy and strategic frontier adjustments for Germany in Alsace-Lorraine.

5. Restoration of Belgium as a sovereign State under the protection of certain guarantees for Germany which, if possible, are to be established by negotiations with King Albert. If these guarantees should not be sufficient in substance, the annexation of Liège with corresponding areas.

6. Local strategic improvement of the boundary of Austria-Hungary against Italy.

7. Recognition of the kingdom of Poland erected by Germany and Austria-Hungary.

8. Strategic improvement of the frontier of Austria-Hungary and Germany against Russia.

Annexation of the territories of Courland and Lithuania by Germany in such a way that, by including the kingdom of Poland, a good strategic frontier will be obtained against Russia, running from north to south.

9. The incorporation of Luxemburg into the German Empire, in case Germany should acquire Briey and Longwy.

10. The inclusion of Montenegro in Austria-Hungary, with the exception of the territory inhabited by the Albanians, which is to be incorporated in Albania.

11. The strategic improvement of the Austro-Hungarian frontier against Roumania, particularly at the Iron Gate south of Brassó and at the Upper Golden Bistritza.

12. Extension of the Bulgarian frontiers by territory occupied by her in eastern Serbia and in Macedonia as well as the Dobrudja.

13. Restoration of the kingdom of Serbia in return for the cession of the territories mentioned in point 12 in eastern Serbia and Macedonia to Bulgaria, of a piece of territory in the north and the northwest to Austria-Hungary and of those areas inhabited by the Albanians, to Albania.

14. Independence of the Albanian State increased by the territories referred to in points 10 and 13, under the protection of Austria-Hungary.

15. The termination of all capitulations in the Turkish Empire and their replacement by international treaties concluded on a basis of reciprocity.

16. Meeting Russia's wishes with regard to passage through the Straits,

in return for the necessary guarantees protecting the safety and sovereign rights of Turkey and the interests of the other Powers.

17. Restoration of the territorial integrity of Greece.

The boundary improvement contemplated in case of the establishment of neutrality in northern Epirus.

18. Renunciation of such economic agreements as would constitute an obstacle in the way of the resumption of trade and commerce between all countries in time of peace.

Treaty of trade and commerce for the purpose of obtaining commercial advantages in Russia for Austria-Hungary and Germany.

Freedom of the seas.

Guarantee of free navigation of the Lower Danube.

19. War indemnities in the shape of compensation and substitutes for war damages.

86

*Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to General Field Marshal
v. Hindenburg*

Autograph.

BERLIN, November 27, 1916.

Bulgaria and Turkey have now agreed to the contemplated peace proposal. Minor changes which have been suggested by Bulgaria as to the text of the note can be made in the course of this week. To this extent, then, the preparations for the step have been completed. The *Hilfsdienstgesetz* will, as I hope, be passed this Thursday or Friday. An interval of about eight days between its passage and the step itself will suffice to avoid creating any wrong impression.

Whether and when the peace proposal will be made, depends entirely upon the military situation. In this connection, it seems to me that in the first place the reaching of a certain climax is an essential preliminary—a climax, nevertheless, from which we would not be likely to descend into a state of inaction—and, in the second place, the establishment to the greatest extent humanly possible of measures of security against potential reverses which might have a decisive effect upon the entire situation. Whether, on this account, the great Italian offensive against Trieste, which is contemplated, and the Russian offensive against the Transylvanian northeast front—in case that, too, is contemplated—is to be awaited without reference to our advance into Wallachia, is a question which can only be determined by a reference to military judgment.

The prospects of the peace proposal remain uncertain. According to information now before us, the demand for peace in France is increasing.

Domestic conditions in Russia, always and in any event very uncertain and hard to estimate, seemed to presage an increasing disruption of the power of the Government. Of late, England has been anxious on account of the question of foodstuffs, the U-boat war, and the Roumanian disaster, and also on account of her diminishing confidence in Russia's reliability. To what extent Stürmer's defeat, apparently the result of English machinations, has affected the situation to our disadvantage, can not be stated at this moment. On the whole, I am inclined to assume, as I have been inclined to do previously, that a peace proposal emanating from us, made under conditions which, as before mentioned, reveal the existence of a good military situation for us, promising nothing in the way of results from our enemies for an indeterminable period, would, at least for France, be very difficult to reject.

President Wilson has informed Count Bernstorff confidentially that it is his intention to put forth an appeal for peace in the time elapsing between now and the New Year. Whether he will really carry out his purpose remains wholly uncertain. He is undecided and fearful of a set-back. We must reckon on this, that he will only issue his appeal if he no longer feels certain that the Entente will meet it with a curt rejection, and that means if the Entente finds itself in a situation where it would not be likely to meet a peace proposal emanating from us with a curt refusal. I leave open the question of whether our position at the council table would be more favorable if the negotiations had been brought about as the result of an appeal by Wilson, than if they had resulted in consequence of a peace proposal made by us. However this may be, it is certain that our situation would be better were the Entente to reject the offer to enter into negotiations made at the instance of Wilson, than if it were to reject a proposal coming directly from us. For this reason the unpopularity with which an appeal made by Wilson would, to a great extent, be met in our country, must not be allowed to have an overwhelming influence upon our decision. On the other hand, in view of the uncertainty which, until the last moment, will characterize Wilson's actions, and in view of the probable growing disinclination on the part of our enemies to enter upon peace negotiations as the winter season passes by, we will not be justified in letting the psychological moment for a peace proposal on our part escape, irrespective of any hope we may entertain with regard to an appeal by Mr. Wilson.

I have the honor to ask your Excellency to give me your opinion, and particularly to state your view as to how, in so far as it is humanly possible to say, the military situation will turn out. The determination to undertake our peace move should, on account of the necessary understanding to be reached with our allies, and for the confidential communication to the Bundesrat, the political leaders, and the press, be reached at least four or five days before it is to be carried out.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 5, 1916.

Telegram No. 1016.

Special: Rush.

Re No. 1502.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
December 5, 1916.

. . . His Majesty and Supreme High Command are of the opinion that the note should be sent off as soon as possible after the fall of Bucharest. This may take place within the shortest of periods, perhaps even in from one to two days.

GRÜNAU.

Ambassador Count Wedel to Secretary of State Zimmermann

Rec. Berlin, December 5, 1916.

VIENNA, December 3, 1916.

DEAR ZIMMERMANN:

. . . Enclosed I am sending you a copy of my interview with Burian and Mérey with regard to the peace proposal. They are, as you see, views expressing directly opposed opinions.

WEDEL.

Yesterday, Baron Burian said to me that Prince Hohenlohe should from now on earnestly press the peace move in Berlin; that they did not appear to be wholly convinced there. I answered that a step of such serious significance should be submitted to the most searching analysis. Whereupon Baron Burian answered that he was not so optimistic as to believe that the peace proposal would be accepted, but that it would have its effect. It would bring the neutrals together and bring them over to our side and exercise partly a direct influence and partly an indirect influence, operating, through the neutrals, on the pacifist tendencies of our enemies. He said that the "poison" had been injected and would act as a dissolvent; that he saw absolutely no difficulties, only advantages and no possible harm. In six or twelve months we would, in any event, be driven to take such a step, for we were numerically and economically the weaker side. In answer to my remark that it was not absolutely certain that our enemies could continue to carry on the war for such a length of time, or that even in case they were able to do so, they were ready to sacrifice so much blood and treasure for an uncertain and, comparatively speaking, insignificant gain, he said that the

enemy was too well acquainted with our economic situation and with the limits beyond which our man-power would not reach, not to know that time played into their hands. That he was for quick action, that the military situation was favorable, and that we must anticipate Wilson. That he saw no reason for allowing that ill-disposed American to play the beautiful and important part contemplated, and from the result of whose efforts as an intermediary no benefits could be expected for us.

Baron Burian, who was the first one to suggest the plan, is undoubtedly hoping, although unconsciously, to gain a personal victory thereby; he seems hardly able to wait until everything is cleared up with Turkey and Bulgaria and we can proceed. Count Tisza expressed himself to similar effect, but with less assurance. V. Mérey entertains an entirely different opinion. It was only lately that he said to me: "Baron Burian is always saying that it could not possibly do any harm. He says that this attitude is inconceivable to him. Let a peace proposal issue in whatever form you choose, it would always be received as a "plea for peace." That the Governments and the public press of the enemy would instantly distort it into this meaning, and would add that our conditions were impossible; this could be seen from a mere reading of the note. That we looked upon ourselves as conquerors and that we would have to evacuate Belgium first, etc. That up to the present time they had always understood how to deceive public opinion in a masterly manner by means of shrewd misinterpretations and twisting of terms, and to lead it in whatever direction they pleased. That that would happen this time also. That he did not consider it impossible that this *démarche* would stiffen the enemy, who were already pretty tired of war, and on top of it all might lead to a prolongation of the war.

Notes on the interview of General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg with the Emperor¹

Rec. Berlin, December 10, 1916.

The military situation is such that the peace proposal can be made by the political branch if—

1. Operations on land and the U-boat war on the ocean can be carried on without any further hindrance;
2. An Army order is issued announcing this;

¹ Marginal note in the handwriting of Secretary of State Zimmerman: These notes, the paper (1) hereto attached and the original of our answer which I have discussed today with General Ludendorff are to be filed. Z 12/9.

3. And the political branch believes that it can bring about the kind of a peace that Germany needs.

As regards 1.

(a) Continuance of operations in any case up to the Serath;

(b) Holding the troops in readiness for this purpose against Denmark and Holland; and commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare by the end of January.

His Majesty, as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, is requested to have the Supreme High Command of the Army and the political branch cooperate on this basis.

HINDENBURG.

December 8, 1916.

(I) *To the German Army*

Soldiers!

Certain of the victory which you have won by your bravery, I and the rulers of the States bound to us in trusty alliance, have made a peace proposal to the enemy.

Whether the purpose aimed at will be reached, remains a question.

Your further duty is, with God's help, to resist the enemy and to defeat him.

90

Report in the handwriting of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Answer to No. 89.

Some six weeks ago, the Supreme High Command agreed to the peace proposal on the assumption that the proposal is not such as to appear as an indication of weakness. To bring about this result, the following was considered essential:

1. Good military situation.

2. Passage of the *Hilfsdienstgesetz*.

Both conditions have been fulfilled.

Further, six weeks ago the Supreme High Command stated that it agreed to the proposition that the compliance of our allies to the peace proposal should be obtained. This has happened, and our allies have not only complied, but are urgently requesting that the plan be carried out.

Under these conditions, a fundamental change in the general situation would be the only justifiable excuse for receding from the action taken. No such change has occurred.

Now, subsequently, the Supreme High Command puts forward three new conditions on which its agreement is to depend. Aside from the fact that such subsequent request seems rather difficult to reconcile with what has gone before, the following comments may be made with regard to these conditions:

1. The continuation of military operations on land and sea is a matter of course. In case our enemies, in accepting our peace proposal, suggest an immediate armistice, then only will we be called upon to adopt new methods to meet the new situation thus created.

2. There is nothing to object to in the army order in the form proposed.

3. The condition that the political branch believes that it can bring about such a peace as Germany needs, does not admit of any definite stand being taken in regard thereto as the result of its indefiniteness and on account of the differences of opinion which might exist with regard to the requisites going to make up a useful peace.

4. The unrestricted U-boat warfare can only be commenced after we have withdrawn the promises which we have given to America, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden. Whether this revocation can take place in January, 1917, can only be determined after taking in the situation as it exists as a whole at that time, and therefore it is a question which can not be finally decided today. On the other hand, if our peace proposal is rejected, our standpoint in the matter of armed merchant ships will be pressed with the utmost vigor in the United States.

We should have appreciated it if the Supreme High Command had postponed its latest report to the Emperor until after a conference with the political branch.

NUMBER 2

PART III.—THE PEACE PROPOSAL OF THE CENTRAL POWERS OF DECEMBER 12, 1916, AND WILSON'S PEACE NOTE OF DECEMBER 21, 1916

PERIOD COVERED, DECEMBER 14, 1916, TO JANUARY 28, 1917

91

*Secretary of State Zimmermann to the Embassy at Madrid and the Legations
at The Hague, Berne, Copenhagen, Christiania, and Stockholm*

Telegrams Nos. 1279, 338, 927, 929, 291, and 1244.

BERLIN, *December 14, 1916.*

For the purpose of meeting the view expressed in the press, that, on making our peace proposal, we should have at once laid our cards on the table and made our peace terms known, kindly bring the following considerations to the attention of the local press in the appropriate manner.

No negotiation can be properly carried out if one party is in a free and untrammelled position to take up matters with an opponent who is bound by a restricted program publicly announced. These are matters of course, but we think it advisable to call them to the attention of those entertaining the views in question.

It was possible, on the other hand, to call attention to certain guiding principles, and this is what was done in the note. The Associated Powers announce therein that their own rights and well-founded claims are not in conflict with the rights of other nations and that it is not their purpose to ruin or destroy their opponents. It is also stated at the same time that the proposals which they would make upon taking up these negotiations would, they are convinced, be of such a nature as to constitute a foundation well adapted for the restoration of a permanent peace. Beyond this point, however, it was impossible for the Associated Powers to go.

In this connection, I also request that the untruthful assertion of *The Times*, that Germany had attempted to influence the United States to make a proposal for mediation, be denied. No such effort was made at any time during the war.

ZIMMERMANN.

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Count Wedel

Telegram No. 907.

BERLIN, December 15, 1916.

Although it is in no way possible to judge at this time what reception our peace proposal will meet with at the hands of our opponents, there is nevertheless certain reason to believe that the answer will not be an unconditional rejection. It would seem, on the contrary, safer to assume that our enemies will attempt to bring us into a tactically unfavorable situation with respect to the neutral nations and with a view to influencing public opinion in their own countries. I believe that we must consider two possibilities in particular:

1. The Entente will demand a disclosure of our peace conditions, or
2. The Entente will declare that it can only enter upon negotiations if, as a preliminary step, we make a binding announcement involving the unconditional restoration and indemnification of Belgium and Serbia. Certain opinions announced in the press would even go so far as to justify the possibility that the above request would be accompanied by the demand that we evacuate all enemy territory occupied by us at present.

I consider it essential for us to make up our mind beforehand as to what attitude we are going to assume with regard to such views. In my opinion, the answer in both cases can be nothing but a blunt refusal. In the first case we ought to state that we will be obliged to announce our peace conditions through our representatives after the peace conference has met. Therefore, it would of course first be essential for our opponents to announce their unqualified willingness to enter upon peace negotiations, and the place as well as the time at which the conference should be held would have to be agreed upon. Accordingly, our answer in the second case ought to be to the effect that the disposition of the Belgian and the Serbian questions, as well as that of the evacuation of occupied territory, must constitute the subject of the negotiations at the peace conference. Your Excellency will discuss the question along these lines with Baron Burian and will inform me of his stand in the matter.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau

Telegram No. 1580.

BERLIN, December 15, 1916.

The press brings reports of the Emperor's speech on the occasion of the inspection of the troops at Mülhausen, which contained features of a nature

to create an impression outside of Germany which, particularly at the present time, is likely to be anything but a happy one.

Please find out who is responsible for having given out the speech to the press. In view of possible future cases of the kind, will your Excellency, perhaps by taking the matter up with General v. Lyncker, take steps to insure the exercise of the greatest caution in connection with giving out such addresses, and have this done, if possible, in cooperation with your Excellency, insuring thereby the necessary safeguard.

ZIMMERMANN.

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 16, 1916.

Telegram No. 1000.

Answer to telegram No. 1580.

KARLSRUHE (ROYAL TRAIN),
December 16, 1916.

The announcement of a speech made by His Majesty to the troops is exceedingly unusual and, as the other gentlemen will remember, has not happened for a long time. General v. Plessen had particularly instructed the Chief of Staff of the Crown Prince Army Group, Count Schulenburg, that, in case there was any intention of making an announcement, this should not be done until an agreement with him had been reached upon the point.

Final jurisdiction lies with the War Press Office in connection with the Supreme High Command, without whose permission an announcement can scarcely be made.

GRÜNAU.

Marginal note

MR. UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE V. STUMM:

Have spoken with v. Haefen,
who is also very much wrought
up about the matter and will take
the necessary steps.

BUSSCHE.

December 17.

Reproduction of the Wolff telegram according to the Basler Nachrichten of December 16, 1916, noon edition

SP. BERLIN, *December 15* (Wolff). On the occasion of the inspection of the troops at Mülhausen, the Emperor made a speech, in which he expressed his thanks to the soldiers forming a frontier guard in Alsace:

The stand in the west made it possible to deal absolutely crushing blows in the east. The Emperor spoke of Roumania in terms of the most passionate contempt—Roumania which, like a brigand, had planned to knife our allies in the back. On this account, God's judgment had manifested itself in the campaign which was carried out under the brilliant leadership of Hindenburg. "In the conviction that we are the absolute conquerors, he had yesterday proposed to the enemy to take up with them the question of continuing the war or making peace. What the result was going to be, he could not yet state. As to whether the conflict should continue was a matter which from now on depended upon them. But if they still think that they have not had enough, this much I know, that you . . ." and here the Emperor stopped with a soldierly turn which brought out a grim smile on the faces of the soldiers.

Surrounded by his officers, the Emperor then began to give a comprehensive picture of the Roumanian campaign and the description of the entrance of the German troops into Bucharest and of their joyful reception by the inhabitants. He told with humorous satisfaction of how a troop of Roumanian pioneers in a street in Bucharest suddenly caught sight of German automobiles and tried to escape by means of a passing electric street car. With regard to the store of wheat which had been bought by the British and was captured by us, the Emperor said: "The English have paid for it, we are eating it, and that is what they call a war of starvation."

Minister Romberg to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 17, 1916.
Telegram No. 1343.

BERNE, *December 17, 1916.*

The publication of His Majesty the Emperor's speech at Mülhausen, through the Wolff agency, has occasioned great alarm amongst those friendly to our cause. People are inclined to construe the fact of the semi-official publication as an expression of disappointment over the expected rejection of the peace note by the enemy and as a threat directed against the Entente.

Our friends are most urgently counseling us to wait patiently in order not to interfere with the development of the favorable impression caused by our note in hostile and neutral countries.

Ask for instructions as to whether anything can be said to lessen the effect of the publication by the Wolff Bureau.

ROMBERG.

97

Secretary of State Zimmermann to the Legations at (1) Berne, (2) The Hague, (3) Copenhagen, (4) Christiania, and (5) Stockholm

Telegrams Nos. 940, 341, 941, 298, and 1266.

BERLIN, December 18, 1916.

To 1: *re* telegram No. 1343.

To 1-5: for the purpose of overcoming the effect of possible one-sided misrepresentation and exploitations of the speech of His Majesty the Emperor of the 13th instant, made to the troops at Mülhausen, I beg to call attention to the expressions of the Imperial Chancellor in the course of his Reichstag speech of the 12th instant, according to which the world is indebted above all to the high-souled and humane determination of the Monarch for our peace move. The move will be carried on by us with the earnest desire to bring it to a favorable issue. But if our efforts should come to naught as the result of the hatred or lack of understanding of our enemies, we shall continue to carry on the fight to the limit of our energy and strength. This natural result of a rejection of our peace proposal ("it will depend upon our enemies whether or not the conflict is carried on") was expressed by His Majesty in the course of his speech in language which was suited to the temper of the purely military establishment, without involving the idea of a threat against our enemies.

ZIMMERMANN.

98

Minister Rosen to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 21, 1916.

Telegram No. 346.

THE HAGUE, December 20, 1916.

The press of Holland has not misrepresented the speech of His Majesty unfairly. The bad impression which it unquestionably created here is to be found mainly in the circumstance that our semi-official telegraph agency found it necessary to publish outside of Germany a speech which was obvi-

ously made for domestic consumption only, and which is here understood from this point of view.

ROSEN.

99

Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 18, 1916.

Telegram No. 482.

VIENNA, December, 17, 1916.

The Nuncio told me that the Pope had commissioned him to inform Baron Burian and myself that he had reliable news to the effect that Wilson was prepared to take up the question of peace mediation provided that all the belligerent States would agree upon a certain obligation to disarm.

In a second telegram, the Pope commissioned him to inform us that he had good ground to believe that the Entente was inclined to peace negotiations if we would disclose "something" concerning our peace conditions; and that the Entente was particularly interested in a guarantee for the restoration and complete independence of Belgium.

The Nuncio added that the Pope would surely be much indebted if, through his cooperation (since there is no Nuncio in Munich at the present time), we could keep the Pope somewhat informed with regard to these questions.

WEDEL.

100

Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 19, 1916.

Telegram No. 485.

Answer to telegram No. 907.

VIENNA, December 18, 1916.

Baron Burian thanks your Excellency for the communication. He agrees with your Excellency's view and considers it likely that we shall be forced to make a categorical refusal. Baron Burian expects that the answer of the Allies will be delayed even a little longer. After its arrival, our answer should, in his opinion, be so drawn up as not to weaken our tactical position or eliminate the possibility of continuing to spin out the thread.

The communications of the Pope announced in connection with yesterday's telegram No. 482 are characterized by Baron Burian as partly of no value, and partly as a confirmation of our impressions.

WEDEL.

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Secretary of Legation v. Lersner
 Telegram No. 1602.
 For General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg.

BERLIN, December 19, 1916.

Although it is in no way possible to foresee the terms of the answer of our enemies to our peace proposal, it is also true that many indications point to the avoidance by them of a direct refusal, and that they will try, by means of some diplomatic tactical move, to place us in a false position in the public opinion of their own countries as well as in that of neutral countries. For instance, I do not consider it wholly out of the question that our opponents will announce their willingness to take up peace negotiations under certain reservations, but that they will attach thereto the condition that an armistice shall be entered upon at once. This proceeding would be advantageous for the Entente Powers, and would apparently be going one better than our peace proposal, from the humanitarian aspect.

It seems to me desirable to prepare ourselves in advance for all possible contingencies. I assume that from a purely military point of view an armistice would be disadvantageous to us, because of the possibility that it would offer Russia, particularly, the opportunity of replenishing its shortage of ammunition and because, even if for the period of the armistice we should be given the opportunity of receiving importations from outside of Germany, we could avail ourselves thereof only to a very limited extent. May I request your Excellency to be good enough to go into this question, perhaps in consultation with the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, for the purpose of determining whether it is possible to make the agreement to an armistice depend on conditions of such a nature as to throw any disadvantages which might result, upon the shoulders of the enemy rather than upon our own. If by any chance this could be accomplished, the difficulties of our diplomatic situation would be materially diminished.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Minister Count Brockdorff-Rantzau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 19, 1916.

Telegram No. 1794.

With relation to telegram No. 1783 of 12/15.

Confidential.

COPENHAGEN, December 18, 1916.

The American Minister to whom, through a mutual acquaintance, I had conveyed the idea that his remarks regarding your Excellency's speech ad-

dressed to the Turkish Minister in his capacity as representative of a Power associated with us, had caused me considerable astonishment, wrote me at once on receipt thereof, without suggesting that he had been informed of my remark, to the effect that he had every reason to assume that your Excellency's speech and our peace proposal were being seriously accepted in England. When I asked him this morning upon what he based his opinion, Mr. Egan proceeded to tell me the following remarkable story.

He stated that a representative of the British Admiralty by the name of Hudson, a man stationed here in Copenhagen, had come to him with the request to be informed as to what he thought of our peace proposal and of your Excellency's speech; that he, Hudson, was to inform his "Government" about it at once. Mr. Egan thereupon answered him, saying that "Government" was to be understood as meaning "Admiralty." Mr. Hudson answered that the Admiralty transmitted his information immediately to the Foreign Office. In answer to my inquiry as to what answer he had given Mr. Hudson, my American colleague stated that he had asserted with all emphasis that he considered the peace proposal to have been made in good faith and in all seriousness; and he claims to have made the same statement to the British Minister here.

Moreover, Mr. Egan added, the British representative here had been told about Mr. Hudson, and had stated that the latter reported direct to the Admiralty.

Tomorrow Mr. Gerard will stop here on his return to Berlin. I asked Egan if he believed that the Ambassador was bringing instructions from the President. The Minister replied that, in his opinion, "the President could no longer hold back from playing the rôle of an intermediary for peace," and that the present was not only the psychological moment for mediation but that it was high time for it. . . .

I believe that Egan would not have gone so far in making these communications if he had not had positive grounds for doing so.

RANTZAU.

Mr. Gerard and his wife arrived here yesterday morning. The Ambassador, who gives the impression of being less nervous than he was at the time of his departure, told me that our peace proposal had been a surprise to him;

that he was expecting to find instructions from the President in Berlin; that he welcomed the step taken by the Central Powers, but that we must be "patient" and quietly await its effect upon the Allies. That the feeling of the Entente Powers was unqualifiedly against a peace, and that the war spirit in France was most bitter; that Ambassador Jusserand was incessantly beseeching President Wilson not to undertake any peace mediation and simply give the Allies time to drag Germany down. That Mr. Wilson, therefore, could not expose himself to "a slap in the face" from the Allies. That the peace proposal must be given time to work slowly like a medicine, and that the President could not afford to expose himself, on Germany's account.

When I interrupted the Ambassador with the remark that nobody expected the President of the United States to enter the lists on behalf of Germany, and that, moreover, the question at issue was the peace of the world, in which the neutrals also most certainly had an interest, and not a peace of which we stood in need any more than the other Powers, and that it was quite probable that our military situation was looked upon as favorable in America also, Mr. Gerard answered that, as a matter of fact, the opinion in America was that the military situation of the General Powers was extraordinarily advantageous, but that for this reason one might be inclined to assume that the peace proposal was merely the last step toward ushering in the unrestricted U-boat war; also that the undertaking of an unrestricted U-boat war would unquestionably mean war with the United States; that it could safely be assumed that, in such case, the other neutrals, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, would step over to the side of the Allies. I answered that I in no way participated in this view regarding the Scandinavian kingdoms. I said that the interests of the Scandinavian countries were not identical with those of the United States and that, moreover, to my own knowledge, America itself had recognized this fact not long since, when it refused to take part in the conferences at Stockholm at which the subject under discussion was not an amicable intervention, but merely the safeguarding of the interests of the neutral States. Gerard was obviously embarrassed, and stated that he did not know that his Government had refused to participate. I answered that my American colleague here had personally given me this information.

As Mr. Gerard again touched upon the subject of our peace proposal in the further course of the interview, I said that it had been submitted in all seriousness and in good faith, that no unbiased, thinking person would entertain any doubt on this point, that the American Minister Egan had assured me of this and had declared that now was the propitious moment for action by the President. Mr. Gerard answered that he believed that the President would assume chiefly an attitude of waiting; and that moreover he believed that Mr. Wilson would find the proper moment when, in

the rôle of leader of the neutral States, he would put the question to the belligerent Powers as to how long and for what purpose they intended to keep on with the present bloodshed; that the neutrals had a right to know for what purpose this war was being fought, because the longer the terrible conflict lasted, so much the greater became the risk that they themselves might be drawn into the catastrophe. Should the Entente Powers answer that their purpose in carrying on the conflict was the destruction of Germany, America would not rest satisfied with this assertion.

At the close of our interview, the Ambassador remarked that the deportation of the Belgians had created a very unfavorable attitude toward Germany, that something must be done to counteract absolutely the effects of this measure, that Cardinal Farley had spoken to him about it in a state of the greatest excitement, and that people in America were entertaining the belief that the days of antiquity had been revived in which prisoners of war were sold into slavery.

To my sharp retort that it was easy to look on from the outside when we were fighting for our existence; and that it certainly seemed a very strange proceeding for neutrals to set themselves up as judges of morals and to desire to prescribe rules of international conduct for a nation which was engaged in a struggle for its very life, Mr. Gerard answered that no one in America believed that Germany was fighting for its existence, since, speaking from a military standpoint, it was undoubtedly victorious on the Continent. The Ambassador will return to Berlin on Thursday and will dine with me tomorrow with his wife.

RANTZAU.

Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 22, 1916.

Telegram No. 492.

VIENNA, December 21, 1916.

Baron Burian submitted to me a copy of the following telegram from the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Copenhagen:

Ambassador Gerard arrived here yesterday. I had the following conversation with him:

According to Gerard's view, who to be sure has been in no direct connection with Wilson for the past two weeks, the peace proposal of the Central Powers is the first important step towards peace and will continue to be so even if the official answers should hereafter result in its rejection. The Ambassador believes that the note was delivered to the Entente without supplementary comments, but that steps of a

more positive nature in the direction of peace should not be postponed much longer. The Ambassador believes that this will take the form of a request to the belligerents, either by the President, the Pope, the King of Spain, or all three together, to make known their war aims, expressed in their lowest terms, in connection with their peace conditions. In case the Entente should by any chance attempt to sustain a demand for the overthrow of Germany and the partition of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, then, said the Ambassador with impressiveness, "we are absolutely determined to force the peace" in imposing an embargo not only with regard to arms and ammunition but on foodstuffs as well.

That, therefore, the Central Powers should not lose patience and should not hope for immediate results. That we should allow certain success time in which to mature.

Gerard is of the opinion that it is of the most vital importance that the deportation of Belgian workmen to Germany be stopped, in order to bring about the psychological moment for the above-mentioned interposition. That the good impression created by the speech of the Imperial Chancellor, in which he openly stated that Belgium was not included in any of the war aims of Germany, had been almost entirely destroyed by this measure, and that a quite indescribable feeling of indignation had been aroused in the United States thereby. That this policy carried out against their Catholic coreligionists had made an extremely deplorable impression even upon the Irish. That for this reason many of them had entirely changed their attitude and gone over into the camp of the Entente. That an Irish Cardinal had made the bitterest kind of complaints to the Ambassador on the subject, stating that Germany's method of procedure reminded one of the darkest period of the Middle Ages, yes, even of the Assyrian period. That for this reason Gerard was firmly resolved to exercise all the influence at his command with the Imperial Chancellor, so that the deportations would stop and the workmen be returned to their homes. The Ambassador hoped that he would be successful in this, since, according to his knowledge, neither Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg nor Baron v. Bissing were supporters of this measure. That it had rather been the result of a demand on the part of General Ludendorff. Mr. Gerard requests me to ask in his name that your Excellency present these matters in this sense in Berlin, since these circumstances constitute a definite obstacle in the way of the development and ultimate consummation of the peace plan.

And Gerard stated further that he was afraid that, in case the desired result were not to follow in the very immediate future, it was possible that steps might be taken in Berlin leading to the resumption of the U-boat warfare *à l'outrance*. The Ambassador proposes to call to the attention of the Chancellor in the most emphatic manner that the failure to meet the guarantees given to the United States in this regard will unquestionably lead to war with the United States, and thereafter with almost all the neutrals in the world. That in his opinion even the unconditional rejection of the peace proposal on the part of the Entente would not constitute sufficient ground to serve as a pretext for the fundamental disregard of recognized principles of international law hitherto recognized as such. That in spite of the honest desire to bring about peace between the belligerents, the United States of Amer-

ica, forced thereto by such provocation and relying upon her steel and iron industries, which exceeded that of Europe by two or three hundred per cent, would plunge into the war with all the determination of the Anglo-Saxon race.

That the United States was not prejudiced and did not feel for the Entente the one-sided sympathy with which it had been reproached, was to be seen from Wilson's attitude in the matter of the refusal of the safe-conduct for Count Tarnowsky. That Wilson had been "furious" and had talked to England very plainly on this subject. That the President had even determined to send a war-ship to first take him, Gerard, to Europe and then bring Count Tarnowsky. That at the last moment, when the British appeared to have receded on this point, this plan had been set aside, but that Wilson would nevertheless have recourse to it again if any further difficulties were to come up.

Baron Burian made the following comments: To the suggestion of Ambassador Gerard with regard to representations which he proposed to make in Berlin concerning the Belgian workmen, he had nothing to add, as he took it for granted that your Excellency in person would be able to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of this regulation. I was able to perceive on this occasion that here, too, wrong ideas are entertained with regard to the carrying out of the plan for the deportation of Belgian workmen. It might be a good plan for more emphasis to be laid by the press on the considerate methods employed by the German authorities, the good maintenance provided for the Belgian workmen and their families, etc.

WEDEL.

105

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Wedel

Telegram No. 922.

BERLIN, December 23, 1916.

It is possible that the peace activities of President Wilson are the result of an understanding with Great Britain in order to make it easier for the Entente to find a way out of the *cul-de-sac* in which it has gotten as a result of the public announcements of its statesmen. We have all the more reason for not allowing the initiative in the peace question to be again taken away from us. A response given as soon as possible, agreeing with the step taken by the President, will make the answering of the note of the Entente easier for us, in case the latter should be of the same tenor as the utterances of Lloyd George. An answer, say, of the following import would also eliminate intervention by President Wilson.

The Imperial Government has received and considered the lofty appeal of the President of the United States of America to provide a basis for the

restoration of a permanent peace in the friendly spirit in which the communication of the President is expressed. The President points out the goal which is the object of his keen desire, and leaves the choice of methods open. In the opinion of the Imperial Government, the opportunity for a direct exchange of opinions is the method best adapted to bring about the consummation desired. In accordance, therefore with the spirit of its announcement of the 12th instant, that it is prepared to enter upon peace negotiations, the Imperial Government has the honor to propose the immediate meeting of the delegates of the belligerent States at some neutral place.

Your Excellency will take up the question with the Minister immediately and ask him, in case he agrees with our views, to take the proper steps at once for submitting the suggestion in question to the Turkish and Bulgarian Governments. I shall at the same time instruct our representatives in Constantinople and Sofia to express themselves to the authorities there to the same effect as soon as similar instructions have been sent to their Austrian colleagues.

I should like to designate next Tuesday for the answering of the note, unless in the meantime our opponents have made such an answer to our peace proposal as makes it necessary for us to change our position. Report by wire.

ZIMMERMANN.

106

Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 23, 1916.
Telegram No. 1118-a.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
December 23, 1916.

For the Imperial Chancellor and the Secretary of State.

General Ludendorff wires as follows:

I have the honor to inform your Excellencies that the armies have reported as follows on the Army order and the German peace proposal. The chief manifestation coming from all sides with regard to this step was that of joy, due to the conviction that a proposal of this character could only come from the one having the upper hand.

But it is also true that the general impression prevails that the proposal will not have a practical result in the effort to attain peace.

Based on the conviction that a rejection is certainly to be expected, the old fighting mood and the desire to carry on the war with reckless energy until final victory is obtained, is everywhere expressed—and this too in the hope that our U-boats will be sent in.

The apprehension was more or less generally expressed that, as the result of tiresome negotiations not to be avoided, a peace might finally

come which, in spite of the enormous sacrifices of blood and treasure, might not do justice to the military successes hitherto attained, the heroic courage of our armies, the sturdy endurance and the hopes of the whole people.

LERSNER.

107

Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 24, 1916.

Telegram No. 1125-a.

Re telegram No. 1602.

For the Imperial Chancellor and
the Secretary of State.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
December 24, 1916.

Field Marshal v. Hindenburg wires:

After a consultation with the Chief of the Admiralty Staff of the Navy, I believe that an armistice on land is feasible under guarantees of existing areas in the possession of both parties. However, Russia would have to retire behind the Sereth. An armistice at sea is out of the question. It would be to England's advantage.

Thus, if an armistice were determined upon, it could not be extended to the sea. In this connection, the U-boat war would have to continue to be carried on and with the adoption of those measures of increased severity which I stated that I considered necessary in my telegram No. 16340 P.

The Chief of the Admiralty Staff has received a copy of this telegram and of No. 16340 P.

LERSNER.

108

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Secretary of Legation v. Lersner

Telegram No. 1630.

For the information of the

Supreme High Command of the Army.

BERLIN, December 24, 1916.

In order to prevent any meddling on the part of President Wilson in peace negotiations, we have decided to answer his note in such a way to reflect the spirit of our peace move, but to make it perfectly clear that it is our desire to deal directly with our enemies. This reply will be delivered on Tuesday in order, if possible, to anticipate the answer of the Entente to our peace proposal, and to make us independent of the contents thereof.

The contents, which after having received the approval of His Majesty the Emperor, have been made the subject of agreement with the Austro-Hungarian Government and which doubtless will meet with the acquiescence of the Cabinets in Sofia and Constantinople, is as follows:

(The note follows.)¹

ZIMMERMANN.

109

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Wedel

Telegram No. 929.

Re telegram No. 500.

For your Excellency's exclusively
personal information.

BERLIN, *December 25, 1916.*

The Ambassador in Washington telegraphs:

Several days ago Lansing wired me concerning Wilson's peace note and told me that the American Government finds its position more and more intolerable on account of the continued violation of its rights. For that reason it was hoping for frank statements from the belligerent Powers with regard to their peace conditions. In answer I stated as my personal opinion that this would be difficult to bring about except at a conference, on account of the press, etc. Lansing replied that disclosures could be confidential and might, little by little, lead to a conference. It would accordingly seem that the opinion which has become general here is correct, that Wilson would like to serve as a clearing house for further steps toward peace. He is strongly supported by public opinion on this side, with the exception of some of our quite rabid opponents, who characterize Wilson's note as pro-German.²

We must prevent at all costs any participation on the part of Wilson in peace negotiations. We are, therefore, in agreement on the point that the Vienna Government should word its note differently. Your Excellency will, however, assure yourself that the wording selected clearly brings out the fact that we desire to deal with our opponents *direct*.

ZIMMERMANN.

¹ 47, Supplements, pt. I, *ante*, p. 1006.

² 45, Supplements, pt. I, *ante*, p. 1004.

III

Secretary of State v. Lersner to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 25, 1916.
Telegram No. 1131-a.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
December 25, 1916.

General Ludendorff requests to have the following telegram sent to Mr. Theotoki in Athens, after having been transcribed into cipher:

To His Majesty the King of the Greeks: Since the dispatch of the peace proposal, our situation in Roumania has improved still further. In spite of all peace blasts, the war will be carried on with all means available.

By Government order,
LUDENDORFF.

LERSNER.

III

Secretary of State Zimmermann to the Emperor

Telegram.

December 26, 1916.

I announce most respectfully to Your Majesty that I have just delivered to the American Ambassador¹ the answer to the peace note of President Wilson, of which Your Majesty has graciously approved.

Mr. Gerard expressed himself as being very satisfied with our note of response. He characterized it as "a damned good note, a fine note, short and sweet."

Most respectfully,

ZIMMERMANN.

III

Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 26, 1916.
Telegram No. 503.
To be read in connection with
telegram No. 929.

VIENNA, December 26, 1916.

On the basis of our telephone conversation of yesterday, I told Count Czernin that a telegram from Washington indicated that Wilson was attempting to prevent conference and to centralize the peace move in himself, so that complete agreement as to our plan of action was all the more important. The Minister agreed.

¹ 47, Supplements, pt. I, ante, p. 1006.

Standpoint that Wilson's participation in peace negotiations would have to be prevented is absolutely shared here.

Neither is the participation by other neutrals desired here. Cancellation of the words "and of the neutral Powers" from the answer to Wilson was greeted with satisfaction here.

WEDEL.

113

Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 2, 1917.

Telegram No. 1.

To be read in connection with
telegram No. 940.

VIENNA, January 1, 1917.

Count Czernin agrees with your Excellency regarding treatment of note of response according to Havas in the press.

He personally considered the tone of the answer impertinent, but the contents not unfavorable, since they did not present an actual rejection, but merely a stepping aside. He laid great stress upon the possibility that had been offered to avoid the snapping of the thread.

WEDEL.

114

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to the Emperor

Telegram.

BERLIN, January 2, 1917.

Yesterday evening the Swiss Minister handed over the reply note at the request of the Italian Government.¹ Read in the French text, which I am respectfully following up with the present message, the note gives the impression of being still more impertinent than in the German translation published up to this time by Wolff. The Entente is attempting to place the responsibility for the continuance of the war on us by the trick of rejecting our peace proposal, on the ground that it is not made in good faith and is without meaning, and declaring their willingness to conclude a peace calling for reparation, restitution and guarantees; the insulting tone of the note makes it impossible, in my opinion, to answer it direct; however, their evasions can not remain unanswered if the outcome of our peace proposal is not to be barren of all effect, not only in the case of the neutrals but among those classes of the enemy population which are tired of war. What I am

¹ 48, Supplements, pt. I, ante, p. 1006.

considering now is a note to those neutrals who themselves had already brought up the question of peace, such as America, Switzerland and the Scandinavian States. Of course we must be very careful to avoid every appearance of seeking the offices of these neutrals as mediaries and also every appearance of running after the Entente. I am at present in wireless connection with Vienna on this subject. Count Czernin is of the opinion, as announced by Count Wedel, that the tone of the answer is impertinent, but that its contents are not unfavorable, since they do not present an actual rejection but merely an evasion. That the opportunity had been given to avoid the snapping of the thread—a point upon which he laid great weight.

With the utmost deference,

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

115

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 2, 1917.

Telegram No. 7.

Only for the Imperial Chancellor
and the Secretary of State.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
January 2, 1917.

His Majesty today expressed himself to me to the effect that, in view of the note of rejection sent by the Entente, he also must recast our war aims and that there could be no further talk of reaching an understanding with France and Belgium. That in view of the fact that King Albert had for the third time refused our offer, he would no longer be allowed to return to Belgium, and that the coast of Flanders must belong to us.

Marginal notes on the New Year's article of the *Magdeburgischen Zeitung* made by the Emperor in connection with the above, follows by courier.

GRÜNAU.

116

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

January 3, 1917.

Telegram No. 10.

Urgent.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
January 2, 1917.

Emperor Karl has this morning sent the following telegram to His Majesty:

The answer of the Entente, so far as we can judge, is, it must be admitted, not happy in the conclusions which it reaches; but in spite

of this it does not absolutely bar the possibility of continuing the further development of the peace plan. My efforts, in which you doubtless participate, are directed to the further encouragement of the existing intense longing for peace the world over, and in this way, in the course of time, to bring about real peace negotiations. And in so doing I feel that we are fulfilling one of our duties toward our people and toward humanity. I greatly apprehend that the Army and Navy order sent out by your Supreme High Command, which speaks to your soldiers in such heart-compelling terms, may possibly result in the final snapping of the thread of peace on the part of our enemies. You will pardon your true friend and ally, whose years count so much less than your own, if he turns to you with the appeal to attempt once more the use of diplomatic channels before addressing our soldiers and thereby burning all bridges which might lead to an effort at understanding.

KARL.

With the assistance of the General Staff, I have drawn up the following answer to His Majesty with reference to today's telegram sent by the Imperial Chancellor:

Hearty thanks for your telegram of January 2, and for the great confidence which you have again expressed in me. I agree fully with you that, in the spirit of our peace proposal, and in the full consciousness of our responsibility to our peoples and to humanity, we should seize every opportunity which might offer us a road to peace.

Since in the meantime you have been informed of the official wording of the note of the Entente, you will agree with me that there is, at least for the present, no possibility of proceeding further by the methods which we have initiated. The Entente itself has destroyed the bridge of understanding by the form and contents of its note. I fear that those voices of the Entente which have falsely designated the internal weakness of our people as the cause for the peace move, will be raised anew in insistence and in volume if we show any further indication of attempting to reach an understanding. By doing this, we would simply separate ourselves further from our aim of bringing our people peace.

So it results that it is only by proceeding unofficially that we can continue to make further attempts to reach an understanding. How this is to be brought about, we may leave to the joint action of our diplomatists. The opportunities will be all the easier to find, as the rejection of our peace proposal results more and more in disillusioning the enemy governments and the enemy peoples, and will induce those circles which are inclined toward peace to take active steps in the direction of our views.

But the Entente note must certainly be answered in order not to jeopardize the result of our peace proposal, either as far as neutrals are concerned or as regards those classes of the enemy population which are tired of war. But at the same time, the impudent tone of the note makes it impossible for us to direct our answer to the Entente Powers themselves. We have no recourse but to turn to the neutral Powers. As rulers and commanders in chief, there now devolves upon us the sacred duty—just as you have stated—of addressing our peoples and our armies, who have been struck hard by the insolent terms of the note.

Your Army order, like the order approved by me, to which you have rendered such tribute by your words of appreciation, echoes the sentiment of our armies and reflects that proud confidence which our war situation justifies.

The earlier and the more harmoniously we sound our call, the more effectively will it impress our armies, our peoples, and the entire world.

With the exception of a few changes in the text and abbreviations, General Ludendorff is satisfied with the draft, and asks your Excellency's opinion so that the draft may be submitted to His Majesty at the noon conference tomorrow. The Austrian Army order reads as follows:

Soldiers! You know that I and the rulers who are allied with me have attempted to bring about that peace which is longed for by the whole world. The response of our enemies has come: without even knowing our conditions, they have repelled the hand which has been held out to them. Once more, my comrades in arms, my call goes out to you. In the course of the thirty months of war which will soon lie behind us, your sword has spoken in plain and clear language. Your heroism and your bravery shall continue to make your words good. The sacrifice is not sufficient; new sacrifices must be offered. All blame attaches to our enemies alone—of this, God is my witness. Four hostile kingdoms have been laid in ruins by you and the armies of your brave allies, mighty fortresses have been taken, broad stretches of hostile ground have been conquered. In spite of all this, the hostile leaders still continue to deceive their people and their armies by raising the false hope that fortune will still smile upon them. Very well—it is for you to continue to render your iron accounting.

Filled with a lofty confidence in my Army, I take my place at your head. Forward in the name of God!

The Supreme High Command would like, if possible, to issue the Army order and proclamation by the 4th of the month.

GRÜNAU.

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 4, 1917.

Telegram No. 15.

In connection with

telegram No. 12.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),

January 4, 1917.

The reply telegram to Emperor Karl has been dispatched in the following form as the result of His Majesty's conference of today noon:

Hearty thanks for your telegram of the 2d and for the great confidence which you are again expressing in me. I agree fully with you that, in the spirit of our peace proposal, we must ascribe to our enemy all

responsibility for the continuation of the war and make this perfectly plain to our people and humanity. Since the Entente has rejected our proposal for an immediate opening of peace negotiations in an insulting manner, our answer to the note of our enemies, in which their responsibility will have to be set out, will not be addressed to them themselves, but only to the neutral Powers. We shall have to agree upon the form that this message shall take at the earliest possible moment. I have given the Imperial Chancellor orders covering the matter.

Since there are still a few days to run before our answer to the note will be made, there devolves upon us, as the leaders and commanders in chief—just as you have stated—the sacred duty of addressing our armies, who have been struck hard by the insolent terms of the note. Your Army order, like the order approved by me, to which you have rendered such tribute by your words of appreciation, echoes the sentiment of our armies and reflects that proud confidence which our war situation justifies. The earlier and the more harmoniously we sound our call, the more effectively will it impress our armies, our peoples and the entire world.

In this connection, the considerations suggested by you have induced me to make several changes in my Army order. It now reads as follows:

TO MY ARMY AND MY FLEET!

Acting in concert with the rulers who are associated with me, I proposed to our enemies to enter at once upon peace negotiations. The enemy have rejected my proposal. Their thirst for power dictates Germany's ruin. Let the war take its course. The heavy responsibility for all the further frightful sacrifices, which it was my will to have spared you, will rest, in the sight of God and humanity, upon the enemy governments.

In righteous indignation at the presumptuous wantonness of our enemies, in the desire to defend our most sacred treasures and to guarantee a happy future for the Fatherland, you will from now on be men of steel.

Our enemies did not desire the understanding which I offered them. With God's help, our weapons will bring them to the point of doing so.

I believe that it would be advisable to reach a final understanding with regard to the publication of the Army orders on the occasion of the visit of your Minister of Foreign Affairs tomorrow, so that they can still be issued *tomorrow*. I believe that, taking into consideration the state of mind of the troops, it is impossible to postpone the order any longer.

GRÜNAU.

*Chief of the General Staff General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg to Imperial
Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg*

Rec. Berlin, January 4, 1917.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
December 31, 1916.

With reference to the two enclosures attached, I would ask your Excellency to inform me whether the statement made by the editor of the *Vas-Diaz-Bureau* in the news coming from Antwerp has any foundation in fact.

I trust that you will not look upon this inquiry as in any way indicative of lack of confidence, but I feel that it is my duty, from the point of view of the Army morale, which would certainly be injuriously affected if what the editor says is given publicity, and in view of the necessary development of Germany's military strength in the future, to be absolutely clear upon this point.

At the same time and for similar reasons, I am taking advantage of the present opportunity to request that I be informed of the minimum territorial demands upon which your Excellency would insist, in view of the present war situation and all contingencies, even including the possibility of the prolongation of the war, in case we should come to the point of peace negotiations. Your Excellency's announcement on December 29, that perhaps we might not be able to keep the ore basin of Briey raised some doubts in my mind as to the fundamental position taken by your Excellency.

I desire to state further that, in case Calais should remain in English hands, as the *Daily Mail* appears to demand, according to the German evening papers of December 29—that is, after our conference—our military situation in Belgium would have to be quite different from that which I have hitherto suggested.

V. HINDENBURG.

*Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to the Chief of the General Staff,
General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg*

BERLIN, January 4, 1917.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the 31st instant, returning its enclosures, and to state in response that Mr. Louis Lochner, the Secretary of Mr. Ford, has been received by the Secretary of State of the Foreign Office. On this occasion Lochner handed over a document for immediate delivery to His Majesty the Emperor, in which His Majesty was asked to express his willingness to grant Mr. Lochner an audience. Beyond this, the Secretary of State gave no furtherance to the request, and contented

himself with addressing certain general remarks to Lochner with regard to the contents of the document, to the effect that the efforts put forth by Mr. Ford with regard to peace would necessarily be met with a sympathetic attitude on the part of the whole world, but that, at the moment, he entertained considerable doubt as to these efforts bringing about any practical result. The Secretary of State did not discuss our peace conditions with Lochner. To what source the statement of the editor in the Vas-Diaz-Bureau may be traced, which statement, as a matter of fact, is in contradiction of the facts of the case, is a matter beyond my knowledge.

Touching your Excellency's question as to the minimum territorial demands upon which we would insist, having in mind the existing war situation and all contingencies, even that of the danger of a prolongation of the war, I beg to call your attention to our exchange of telegrams of the 5th and 6th of November of last year,¹ the contents of which are still binding upon me today. Since statecraft will always continue to be the art of acquiring the obtainable, we certainly are not in a position at this time to know whether or not we shall be able to arrive at the consummation of those aims which we have marked out in advance. It is in this sense that I ask that my remarks with regard to the acquisition of Briey and Longwy and Briey² be interpreted. I am just as impressed as your Excellency with the extraordinary importance which the acquisition of these areas would mean to us from a military standpoint as well as from that of our economic future. But when the time comes for us to take our places at the conference table with our opponents, our principal task in connection with the attainment of certain separate war aims must consist in making the best of all those opportunities which may turn up in the course of the negotiations for bringing about a split in the coalition which is now opposing us. It will then be revealed whether or not the opportunity is likely to arise, as the result of making concessions to, say, one of our opponents, to create dissension in the camp of our foes, and perhaps to succeed in making a separate peace with a single Power. Whether that single Power will be France or Russia or—what seems least likely—England, can in no wise be foretold at this time. The exercise of moderation in our demands in one direction would naturally make it possible for us to increase our demands in the other.

It would seem that in all likelihood the negotiations will pursue a course leading directly to a conference at some neutral place between our representatives and those of our associates, and the representatives of our opponents. We shall provide our representatives with a maximum of the demands with which they are to enter upon negotiations—not with the minimum which we have in mind. Our representatives will continuously keep us informed as to the course taken by the negotiations and, from time to time, they will

¹ 79, 80, Supplements, pt. I, *ante*, pp. 1061, 1062.

² Words "and Briey" are probably a misprint.

be provided with further instructions as to the concessions which they may be permitted to make, as well as the demands on which they must insist. It is obvious that if negotiations should perchance reach a point where the separation of France from the coalition or even, say, the conclusion of peace itself, would depend upon the question as to whether we should insist upon the acquisition of Briey and Longwy under all circumstances, this question could only be finally decided after consultation with the Supreme High Command, and in accordance with the commands of His Majesty the Emperor. The answer to this question would in such case depend upon our judgment of our combined military, economic and diplomatic situation at that time—a situation which, in the interval, can of course very materially change. For if, as I could not venture to assume at this time, the point of peace negotiations were to be reached within a definite period, months would pass before the negotiations could reach such a decisive stage. Great, therefore, as is the importance which I, too, attribute to the acquisition of the areas under discussion as one of our most essential war aims, to the realization of which we must devote all our energy, in the same degree would I refrain from accepting the responsibility of announcing the fulfilment of this aim unqualifiedly as a *sine qua non* of the concluding of peace.

I thoroughly join in the view that the remaining of Calais in the hands of the English would not be without its influence on the conditions upon which we would accept peace. But I have altogether too high an opinion of the political acumen of the English to assume that they could seriously consider acquiring territory at the cost of the French, which would have the result of changing the present feeling of friendship in France to an attitude of the bitterest opposition, and pave the way for the downfall of that policy which England has so successfully carried on for centuries of playing one Continental Power against the other.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Conference of the Morning of January 6

Rec. Berlin, January 7, 1917.

Present:

Count Czernin, Imperial and Royal Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Ambassador Prince Hohenlohe,
The Imperial Chancellor,
Secretary of State Zimmermann,
Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm.

Count Czernin reads the draft of an answer to the note of the Entente. This draft, he says, is not good in every respect. One of the salient points

was as to whether or not we should express the thought that neither of the two contending parties could definitely annihilate the other. This would probably be difficult to put through, so far as the military branch is concerned, and was also a variation from the army order issued yesterday. That he still maintained his opinion that the war could only be terminated by means of a compromise. That perhaps it was not practical to answer at this particular moment, but to continue working along these lines and to await a later opportunity.

The Imperial Chancellor expressed the opinion that an answer should be delivered to neutral Powers at this time; that the Army order was so drawn up that nothing would stand in its way; that it was hardly possible to allow the answer of the Entente to be left without a reply; that the thought which appealed to him strongly was that at the present stage of the war we had already reached our defensive war aim; that, on the contrary, the Entente was still removed from its war aims in very great measure; that in the passage regarding Belgium there was much that was good.

Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm thought that a note should be sent to the neutrals in the way of a commentary on the orders given to the army, but that before doing so it was necessary to wait in order to find out what answer the Entente would send to Wilson.

Secretary of State Zimmermann was of the opinion that the answer of the Entente to us was so humiliating as to make it essential for us to unmask it completely in our reply; that the insults contained in the answer must be refuted in curt and pointed terms.

Minister Count Czernin: It is exactly on account of its tone that the Entente note has made such a bad impression upon the neutral Powers; we must avoid the danger of using a similar tone, for a battle of words can avail us nothing at the present time.

Secretary of State Zimmermann: In our answer, we should adopt a tone of curtness and point to the political infamy perpetrated by the Entente, for that is what our people expect us to do.

The Imperial Chancellor was of the opinion that we should not, in the course of the note, go into the preliminary history of the war, since such a battle of words would not bring peace any nearer.

Secretary of State Zimmermann thereupon read the draft of a note of response, which was considered by the other gentlemen as too long and as indulging too much in polemics.

Secretary of State Zimmermann expressed the belief that our public opinion demands a long and sharp note.

The Imperial Chancellor expressed the opinion that the effect upon our public opinion was really a matter only of secondary importance; that the real purpose of the note was to emphasize the impression which our peace proposal had made upon foreign countries; that this would not, however,

result if we were to engage in polemics, but only if we should express ourselves in short and definite terms against the imputations of the Entente.

Count Czernin emphasizes the thought that our war aims have already been reached, while as a matter of fact the Entente has fallen far short of reaching this situation from its standpoint.

The Imperial Chancellor is of the opinion that we should not allow our answer to in any way create the impression that we were running after the others; but that, on the other hand, the door should not be completely locked and bolted against peace.

Prince Hohenlohe expressed the belief that this had already been accomplished by the Army order.

Count Czernin brought up the point as to whether or not it was necessary for all four Powers to answer in the same note, stating that this would result in great delay. Perhaps it would suffice if the answer were the same as to contents but different as to text.

The Imperial Chancellor considers it inadvisable to give the Bulgarians a free hand in answering the note, since that might make it too simple a matter for Radoslawow to run off the track; in any case, the Bulgarian reply note must be submitted to us before it is sent.

It was decided to draw up a note based on the Austrian and German draft, but to wait before dispatching it until the answer of the Entente was in President Wilson's hands. That it was not essential that the notes should be identical in text.

Rec. Berlin, January 7, 1917.

On the occasion of the conference with Minister of Foreign Affairs Count Czernin on January 7, 1917, the following was agreed upon:

The tone of the Entente's reply to our note of December 12, 1916, makes it impossible for us to reply to the enemy by direct communication. On the other hand, it is essential, in connection with the Entente note, to place the responsibility for the prolongation of the war in unmistakable and clear-cut terms before our own people, as well as those of the neutral Powers and of our enemies. With this in mind, a note should be addressed to all the neutral Powers, not only to the Powers charged with our interests, so as to avoid any appearance of running after our enemies. This note should be so constructed as not to suggest in any way that we desire to have peace at any price; on the other hand, the door should not be entirely closed to the possibility of peace. As regards the four associated Powers, the answer must be the same as to contents but not identical as to text. To attempt to

have the notes identically the same would cause delay; and it goes without saying that such questions as Serbia and Belgium can not be handled alike in detail. It will be unnecessary to await the answer of the Entente to Wilson, since the object of our note, to establish the blame before all the world, will be obtained just as well if not better by answering at once, quite independent of the Entente's reply to Wilson. If, contrary to all expectation, the hostile note to Wilson were not, after all, such as to preclude the possibility of a peace, we should, in this contingency, be obliged to take a different stand. This will not be prejudiced by the step that we are now taking.

The reading of the draft led to its acceptance in its entirety, with certain amendments duly agreed upon.

122

Note of the German Government to the Neutral Powers

BERLIN, January 10, 1917.

The Imperial Government has, through the good offices of the Government of the United States of America, the Royal Spanish Government and the Government of the Swiss Confederation, received the reply of their opponents to the note of the 12th of December, in which Germany, acting in cooperation with her associates, proposed the immediate opening of peace negotiations.

Our enemies reject this proposal on the ground that it is a proposal not made in good faith and without significance. The form in which their communication is drawn up makes an answer addressed to them out of the question. The Imperial Government considers it important, however, to announce to the Government of the Neutral Powers its estimate of the situation. The Central Powers have no occasion to go into renewed and detailed discussions concerning the origin of the World War. History will judge as to who shall bear the enormous blame for the war. It will not overlook in its final word England's encircling policy, France's policy of revenge, Russia's yearning for Constantinople, any more than it will the provocation of Serbia, the murder of Serajevo, and the general mobilization of Russia which meant war against Germany.

Germany and its associated Powers, who were obliged to resort to arms to defend their liberty and their existence, look upon their war aims as accomplished. On the other hand, our enemies have drifted further and further from the realization of their plans which, according to the statements of their responsible statesmen, were adopted for the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine and several Prussian provinces, the overthrow and the territorial

curtailment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the partition of Turkey and the mutilation of Bulgaria. In the face of such war aims, the demand for atonement, restitution and guarantees sounds strange coming from the lips of the enemy.

Our enemies characterize the peace proposal of the four allied Powers as a war maneuver. Germany and her allies must enter the most emphatic protest against so false an interpretation of the motives which inspire them, and which they have openly disclosed. They were convinced that a just peace, and one acceptable to all the belligerents is possible, that it might be brought about through a direct oral exchange of views, and that, for this reason, further bloodshed is indefensible. Their readiness, announced without any reserve, to make their peace conditions known when the negotiations in question were opened, disposes of every doubt of their good faith. Our opponents, who had full opportunity to test the proposal by investigating its merits, have neither attempted to do so nor made counter-proposals. Instead, they declare that peace is impossible in the absence of guarantees for the restoration of violated rights and liberties, the recognition of the fundamental principles of nationality and the right of small States to exist. The world will not be able to admit that these demands are made in that good faith which our opponents deny to the four allied States, if it bears in mind the fate of the Irish people, the destruction of the liberty and independence of the Boer republic, the subjection of the north of Africa by England, France, and Italy, the oppression of foreign peoples by Russia, and, finally, the oppression of Greece, which stands before us without a parallel in history.

Nor does it lie in the mouth of those Powers to complain about the supposed violations of international law by the four allied States, since they have from the beginning of the war trampled the law underfoot and torn up the treaties upon which its enforcement depended. Even in the first weeks of the war, England renounced the obligations of the Declaration of London, the contents of which had been recognized by its own delegates as conformable to international law, and in the further course of the war violated most gravely the Declaration of Paris so that its arbitrary rules adopted for the conduct of maritime war have created a state of illegality. The war of starvation against Germany, and the pressure exerted in the interest of England upon the neutral Powers stands in just as flagrant variance with the rules of international law as it does with the dictates of humanity. And another violation of international law which can not be reconciled with the fundamental principles of civilization, was the transportation of colored troops to Europe and the carrying of the war into Africa, which was accomplished in violation of existing treaties and has undermined the reputation of the white race in this hemisphere. The barbarous treatment of prisoners, particularly in Africa and Russia, the dragging off

into captivity of the civil population of East Prussia, Alsace-Lorraine, Galicia and the Bukowina, are further proofs of the respect which our opponents entertain for law and civilization.

At the close of their note of the 30th of December, our opponents refer to the peculiar situation of Belgium. The Imperial Government refuses to admit that the Belgian Government has always observed the obligations imposed upon it by its neutrality. Even before the war, Belgium, as the result of English machinations, relied upon England and France from the military standpoint, and by doing so violated the spirit of those treaties which were to secure its independence and its neutrality. Twice did the Imperial Government announce to the Belgian Government that it was not coming to Belgium as an enemy, and requested it to spare the country the horrors of war. For the purposes of this particular case, the German Government volunteered to guarantee the independence and the territorial *status quo* of the Kingdom to the fullest extent and to make compensation for all injuries which the passage of the German troops might occasion. It is well known that the Royal Britannic Government resolved in the year 1887 not to oppose the claim of a right-of-way through Belgium under these conditions. The Belgian Government repeatedly refused the proffer of the Imperial Government. It is upon her and upon those Powers that persuaded her to adopt this attitude that the responsibility for the fate which has fallen upon Belgium is to be laid. The Imperial Government has repeatedly denied the false accusation concerning the German conduct of war in Belgium and the measures which were taken there in the interests of military security. It protests anew with the utmost emphasis against these calumnies.

Germany and its allied Powers have made an honest attempt to end the war and to lay the foundation for an understanding between the conflicting parties. The Imperial Government takes the position that the decision as to whether the road which led to peace should be followed or not depended entirely upon their opponents. The enemy Powers have refused to take this path and upon them rests the entire responsibility for further bloodshed. As for the four allied Powers, they will continue to fight in quiet self-reliance and in confidence that they are in the right, until such a peace is attained as shall constitute a guarantee for the honor, existence, and freedom of development of their own people, and which, further, shall result in all the States of the European Continent enjoying the blessing of cooperating in mutual respect and on an equal footing for the solution of the great problems of civilization.

The Imperial Government has the honor of requesting _____
to bring the above note to the consideration of the _____
Government.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew the assurance of my respect.

123

Minister v. d. Lancken to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 11, 1917.
Telegram No. 2.

BRUSSELS, January 11, 1917.

Director Kellog of the Relief Commission, who has been staying in France and England for the past weeks, and who has been known to me for more than a year as an American with German sympathies, expressed himself as follows to Dr. Bruhn, a member of the political division:

That nothing of late has done more to injure the mutual relations of America and Germany than the deportation of workmen from Belgium; that indignation had been raised to a particularly high pitch because, in spite of our constantly repeated solemn assurances, great numbers of those not without occupation, and even more than a thousand officials engaged in the American relief work, were deported. As a result, we were accused broadcast of having given new proof of how little reliance was to be placed upon the German word. Kellog asserted that Wilson's peace move, and particularly its effect upon the Allied peoples, had been notably hampered by these occurrences.

I have thought fit to report the following to your Excellency incidentally in connection with the contemplated conference with General Groener. I should like to suggest, in further reference to the handling of the question of the workers, the following:

Enforced conscription to be exercised in Brussels only from now on and to continue theoretically, but only as a threat to act as an effective stimulant to the voluntary enlistment which is to be organized.

LANCKEN.

124*Proclamation*

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, January 12, 1917.

TO THE GERMAN PEOPLE!

Our enemies have cast off the mask.

At first, with scorn and hypocritical talk of love of liberty and humanity, they rejected our honorable peace proposal. In their answer to the United States they have now revealed themselves as cherishing a lust for conquest, the infamy of which is heightened by their slanderous premises. Their purpose is the destruction of Germany, the partition of the Powers which are associated with us, and the enslavement of Europe and the seas under the same yoke under which Greece is groaning. But what they have not

been able to bring about in thirty months of the bloodiest fighting and of the most unscrupulous war on commerce, they will be unable to bring about in all the days that are to come. Our glorious victories and that iron strength of will with which our fighting people have borne every hardship and every want, both when facing the enemy and at home, stand sponsor for the fact that our beloved Fatherland has nothing to fear from the future. High-flaming indignation and a holy anger will redouble the strength in each German man and woman, whether that strength is exercised in battle, work, or the sacrifice of suffering.

The God who planted this glorious spirit of freedom in the heart of our brave people will grant to us and to our faithful allies, whose quality has been tested in the storm of war, a crowning victory against all hostile thirst for power and lust for destruction.

WILLIAM I.R.

125

Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 15, 1917.

Telegram No. 71.

Exclusively for the Imperial Chancellor
and the Secretary of State.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
January 15, 1917.

His Majesty has received a great number of telegrams expressing congratulations and encouragement after the issuance of the proclamation to the German people. I have learned in strict confidence that Field Marshal Hindenburg and General Ludendorff have been to a great extent responsible for this, in order to show the world how entirely the whole of Germany stands behind the Emperor. His Majesty has expressed himself as delighted over the congratulations which have been expressed.

In my opinion, a far-reaching publication of the same in the press will please His Majesty.

LERSNER.

126

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Secretary of Legation v. Lersner

Telegram No. 86.

BERLIN, January 14, 1917.

Ambassador, Washington, telegraphs on the 10th instant:

Memorial regarding armed merchant ships delivered to Lansing. In my opinion, to proceed along the lines set out in this memorial will

bring peace mediation of Wilson to naught and, instead, will result in a break with the United States unless we refrain from action against armed ships, at least until some agreement has been reached with this Government. It is possible that we may succeed in having Americans warned against taking service on ships which are armed for purposes of attack. But in any case this Government must be allowed time for this purpose. Since Wilson decides *everything*, any interview with Lansing is a mere matter of form. Bernstorff.

ZIMMERMANN.

Telegram No. 93.

Continuation of No. 86.

BERLIN, *January 15, 1917.*

The Ambassador in Washington telegraphs further:

Lansing never answers until he has received instructions from Wilson. This being the case, the latter will first have to read the memorial.

I can not tell from here how much reliance your Excellency places upon Wilson's peace move. Aside from this, a sense of duty impels me to state positively that I consider a break with the United States unavoidable if we proceed in accordance with the memorial. Bernstorff.¹

ZIMMERMANN.

127

Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 15, 1917.

Telegram No. 67.

Re telegram No. 86.

For the Secretary of State.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
January 14, 1917.

His Majesty asks your Excellency to be good enough to explain the sentence: "In my opinion, to proceed along the lines set out in this memorial will bring peace mediation of Wilson to naught."

His Majesty is of the opinion that a peace mediation on the part of Wilson has never been in contemplation.

LERSNER.

128

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Secretary of Legation v. Lersner

Telegram No. 89.

Re telegram No. 67.

BERLIN, *January 15, 1917.*

Be kind enough to inform His Majesty that the expression used by Count Bernstorff "peace mediation of Wilson" does not exactly apply to existing

¹ 56, Supplements, pt. I, *ante*, p. 1017.

circumstances. As His Majesty states, a peace mediation by Wilson has, as a fact, never been in contemplation. Count Bernstorff has not been left in error with regard to this, and has obviously merely made misuse of the term. In my opinion, the Ambassador merely has in mind the peace move set on foot by Wilson in his note to the belligerent Powers which, in the meantime was wholly brought to naught by the answer of the Entente. The telegram of Count Bernstorff left before this answer of the Entente reached Washington.

ZIMMERMANN.

129

Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 16, 1917.
Telegram No. 72.
Only for the Secretary of State.
Re telegram No. 89.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
January 16, 1917.

His Majesty thanks your Excellency for your information.

His Majesty remarked, with regard to telegram No. 93, that he placed "absolutely no" reliance on Wilson's peace move. In case the break with America was unavoidable, "matters can not be changed; we shall go ahead."

LERSNER.

130

Extract from a Report of Colonel Renner, Military Attaché at The Hague

Rec. Berlin, January 20, 1917.
Report on England.

THE HAGUE, January 18, 1917.

The English supplemental note to America.

The supplementary remarks which Balfour annexed to the reply note of the Entente to Wilson make a very interesting piece of reading. They should be read with the greatest care; for they give a very true picture of the psychology of our opponents, to portray which, as well as to give a full conception of which, has often been attempted from this point.

It would be entirely wrong to consider the contents of the English supplemental note as nothing but idle "characteristically English" hypocrisy. I understand perfectly well why people express themselves otherwise for mere propaganda purposes; but as a matter of fact there can be absolutely no doubt that the English supplemental note represents the honest conviction

tion of those who are arrayed against us in battle and that this conviction is shared by a great portion of the neutral world.

This World War has become a conflict between two systems of philosophy—Balfour's last note is again clear proof of this. Our opponents honestly believe (and they are not merely hypocritical in this, as we hear said over and over again in Germany) that they are fighting for the right which has been trodden underfoot by might. They are absolutely convinced of the fact that Germany is the materialized embodiment of the principle of power exercised in contempt of every right, and that for this reason Germany's defeat is absolutely an essential condition to the healthy and happy development of the entire world. . . .

With regard to "ideal war aims," that is, with regard to the battle against the doctrine that might makes right, those persons in England who are most inclined toward peace are in absolute agreement with the wildest jingoes. With regard to the practical war aims, that is, in so far as concerns what is necessary to free the world from the dangers of the German philosophy of might, this or that element of the English peace party, or, better said, "future peace party," differs from those who rule in England today and whose word is followed in the peace debates and whose strength can only be broken by new and heavy disillusionments on the part of the British people. The decision by force of arms must be brought about this year. As long as our opponents believe that they can win the war—and today they are absolutely convinced that they will be victorious—peace negotiations are positively hopeless. It is, however, possible that even today the cause of peace might be advanced if it were possible to convince the future peace party in England that the terrible sacrifices made necessary by the war for the ideal war aims are unnecessary. Regardless of who may wish it, the Belgian question can not be avoided. I perfectly appreciate all the arguments which can be urged against a settlement of the Belgian question for the purpose of furthering the interests of peace at the present time. At the same time, we must be perfectly clear on the point that the acquisition of Belgium or even of a small portion of Belgium, can, neither today nor ever, be obtained as the result of negotiations. He who wishes to keep Belgium must be able to dictate his own peace to the world. It is a subject which the world of today will refuse to discuss. Every answer of our opponents to the German peace proposal proves once more the quite overwhelming significance of the Belgian question in this World War. In my last report from London I wrote in July, 1914, that it was on the Belgian question that England's participation in the war would depend. We can say today that the Belgian question has had quite a powerful influence on the course of the war, and that it will have a very important bearing on Germany's future.

RENNER.

Secretary of State Zimmermann to the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral v. Holtzendorff

Confidential.

BERLIN, January 22, 1917.

Referring to the conversation which I have just had with your Excellency, I respectfully submit herewith the answer of the Imperial Ambassador at Washington to our instructions of the 16th instant on the U-boat question.

ZIMMERMANN.

Copy telegram No. 222.

Answer to No. 157 of January 16.

WASHINGTON, January 19, 1916.

War unavoidable if we proceed as contemplated. The danger of a break could be lessened by the setting of a definite period, say, one month, for the purpose of sparing neutral ships and passengers, since a previous timely warning seems to be impossible under the present contemplated action. I shall have to give the cue for rendering the German steamers unseaworthy on the 1st of February, as the carrying out of my instructions here will be looked upon as a declaration of war and for this reason will be followed by a policy of the strictest surveillance. As it is, another *Lusitania* case can, seemingly, be expected soon.

If military reasons are not absolutely imperative, a postponement would be urgently desirable. Wilson believes he will be able to obtain peace on the basis of the principle announced by us of equal rights to all nations. House told me even yesterday that Wilson was preparing to go ahead in the immediate future, since he considered the situation favorable for a peace conference soon.

BERNSTORFF.¹

*Chief of the Admiralty Staff Admiral v. Holtzendorff to Captain v. Bülow in General Headquarters*²

Telegram No. B-2539 I.

BERLIN, January 23, 1917.

Foreign Office has sent over telegram No. 222 of the Ambassador in Washington to Headquarters. Have this telegram delivered to you and submit it at once to General Ludendorff with the following expression of opinion. Admiralty Staff is opposed to disclosure of our time allotments which are included in our U-boat orders. Reasons against such disclosures:

¹ 60, Supplements, pt. I, ante, p. 1021.

² From the records of the Admiralty Staff.

1. That enemy ships would immediately and in increased numbers sail in the guise of neutrals, in order to make use of the privilege;

2. That the deterrent effect upon the neutrals which is exactly the result which the present form of the note is intended to bring about, would be materially weakened because neutrals would retain a feeling of security for an appreciable time;

3. Neutral ships and unarmed enemy passenger steamers would be able to bring important shipments to England to a considerable extent and in certain security, and would be prompted to do all in their power because the period of respite would be known to them.

Situation is very urgent, since the Foreign Office must have an answer today from the Admiralty Staff, as connection with Count Bernstorff is very difficult.

Chief of the Admiralty Staff
of the Navy v. HOLTZENDORFF.

133

*Captain v. Bülow to the Admiralty Staff, Berlin*¹

Telegram No. 398.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,
January 23, 1917.

The Chief of the General Staff after being informed as to the premises is in entire agreement with the views of your Excellency, as expressed in telegram B-2539-1.

BÜLOW.

134

Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral v. Holtzendorff, to Secretary of State Zimmermann

Rec. Berlin, January 24, 1917.

BERLIN, January 24, 1917.

Acting in agreement with the Supreme High Command of the Army, I beg to respectfully inform your Excellency that I am not in the position to make known to the American Government the periods of time which may be allotted in favor of the neutral Powers and of unarmed enemy passenger steamers, since to do so would result in disadvantages of a military nature of great importance.

¹ From the records of the Admiralty Staff.

A new reading of the instructions which were sent to Count Bernstorff on the 16th of January, shows me that the passage: "When making this communication, call attention to the fact that, in the orders to be issued to the U-boats, provisions are being made for a sufficient opportunity for sparing neutral ships and for the safety of passengers on unarmed enemy passenger ships, and that, moreover, neutral vessels which may be in transit on the 1st of February to or from ports in the restricted zone can avoid entering it, or shall be allowed to leave it by the shortest possible route without danger of being sunk, if all possible steps are at once taken to provide them with full information. In like manner, neutral ships will be allowed to leave the ports of the restricted zone before the evening of February 4 and to take the shortest cut out of the zone."—is capable of misinterpretation. I gained the impression from Count Bernstorff's telegram that he has been misunderstood. Therefore, I venture to suggest to your Excellency to again notify Count Bernstorff that the orders which have been issued with a view to sparing neutral shipping and unarmed enemy passenger steamers definitely announce that those ships which have started their voyage to the ports of the restricted area before February 1, can reach their destination without being attacked without warning, if for some reason or other they should not have received the warning which we have required. Of course these ships will not then be allowed to leave the ports of the restricted zone except at their own risk.

"Ships which start their voyage after the 1st of February do so at their own risk." Under this regulation, the 1st of February will still be free for neutral shipping. In case of a difficult passage, it is possible for them to be more than twelve days on the ocean and they would then be exposed to attack without warning on the 13th. If this possibility of a conflict is deemed secondary in importance to the political effect of the plain announcement, then, from our standpoint no objection will be raised against the interpretation of the Foreign Office.

HOLTZENDORFF.

135

Secretary of State Zimmermann to the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral v. Holtzendorff

Rush.

BERLIN, January 24, 1917.

As the result of your Excellency's kind letter of today,¹ I note to my regret that you are not in a position to notify the American Government of the periods of time which may be allotted in favor of the neutrals and of

¹ 134, Supplements, pt. II, ante, p. 1109.

unarmed enemy passenger steamers, since you feel that to do so would result in very great disadvantages of a military nature. According to the further remarks of your Excellency, a period of only twelve days is provided in their favor, so that ships to which your remarks refer and which, as the result of damage by sea, bad weather or other accidents, enter the restricted zone on the 13th day will thereupon be exposed to attack without warning. If this plan is adhered to, we can assume with certainty that neutral ships and passenger steamers carrying the nationals of neutral States will be sunk. A declaration of war on the part of the United States will be bound to follow immediately, in case, as Count Bernstorff assumes, it will not already have been announced by the 1st of February. But such sinkings would in all probability result in the remaining neutral Powers joining together against us. This regrettable result might possibly, in my opinion, be avoided if we should propose to the United States a period of perhaps twenty days' grace for neutral and unarmed enemy passenger steamers, which would guarantee the essential security against the apprehended mishaps and make it easier for the President to put up with our announcement. The temporary falling off in the amount of destruction of the existing tonnage of our enemies, which would result from this short increase in the period of grace, would hardly weigh in the balance when compared with the military disadvantages which would result if the now remaining neutral world passes over to the side of our opponents.

I would be grateful to your Excellency if you would be kind enough to survey the situation once more and let me know your views at your earliest possible convenience. I am sending a like communication to the Supreme High Command of the Army.

ZIMMERMANN.

136

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau

Telegram No. 157.

BERLIN, January 24, 1917.

I am sending the following message to the Admiralty Staff:

(Copy of 135.)

Please inform the Supreme High Command to like effect and put the question whether or not they agree with the views expressed in the paragraph preceding the last. You will also take up the matter in conference with His Majesty.

ZIMMERMANN.

137

Secretary of State Zimmermann to the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral v. Holtzendorff

BERLIN, January 25, 1917.

In connection with my letter of yesterday, I have the honor to inform your Excellency that I have just received the following telegram from the Imperial Ambassador in Washington, dated the 21st instant:

If period of grace in favor of neutral shipping and unarmed enemy passenger steamers is allowed, I consider it entirely possible that Wilson will merely break off relations and not declare war, and that, on the contrary, he will redouble his efforts in behalf of peace.¹

In view of the above, I venture to urge that your Excellency again give careful consideration to the question at issue.

ZIMMERMANN.

138

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau

Telegram No. 158.

BERLIN, January 25, 1917.

Count Bernstorff telegraphs under No. 225 of the 21st of the month:

If period of grace in favor of neutral shipping and unarmed enemy passenger steamers is allowed, I consider it entirely possible that Wilson will merely break off relations and not declare war, and that, on the contrary, he will redouble his efforts in behalf of peace.

On the strength of this telegram I have again made urgent representations to the Admiralty Staff in accordance with my communication of yesterday.

ZIMMERMANN.

139

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 25, 1917.

Telegram No. 129.

Immediate.

Re telegram No. 157.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
January 25, 1917.

Instructions taken up with the Supreme High Command of the Army this morning, members of which were contemplating getting into touch

¹ 62, Supplements, pt. I, ante, p. 1027.

with the Navy. In the end, there was no inclination to adopt your Excellency's point of view. Somewhat later, Admiral v. Holtzendorff informed the Supreme High Command of the Army of your written communication, with the additional suggestion that he had answered it in the negative also, on account of the fact that the U-boats had already left port with their instructions and that a change in the orders issued was no longer certain of reaching them. He asked whether the Supreme High Command agreed with this response, and was answered in the affirmative.

GRÜNAU.

140

*Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral v. Holtzendorff, to Secretary of State
Zimmermann*

Rec. Berlin, January 25, 1917.

*Re communication of January 24, 1917.*¹

BERLIN, January 25, 1917.

For military reasons which have already been set forth, an extension of the period of grace to be allowed neutral Powers beyond the 12th of February is out of the question. And, moreover, it would be in opposition to the result reached in all preceding deliberations, as well as to the expression of the Emperor's desire, if regardless of the instructions which have been issued to Count Bernstorff, the period of grace which we have determined upon were to be brought to the knowledge of the United States. On this point I have asked the Supreme High Command of the Army to inform me of their position.

Since my departure for Headquarters to enter into conference with the representatives of the Austrian fleet is set for this afternoon, I feel myself bound again most energetically to point out the necessity of stating that the announcement of the U-boat war must be made to the neutral Powers early in the morning of the 1st of February. On the 1st of February the U-boats will commence the war in accordance with the orders which have been issued to them.

HOLTZENDORFF.

¹ 135, Supplements, pt. II, *anté*, p. 1110.

141

*Captain v. Bülow to the Admiralty Staff, Berlin*¹

Telephone conversation.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,
January 25, 1917.

Captain v. Bülow informed General Ludendorff that the Admiralty Staff has rejected the last proposals of the Foreign Office on the ground that the U-boats had already left. Captain v. Bülow asked General Ludendorff whether the Supreme High Command of the Army was in agreement herewith. The Supreme High Command of the Army is very definitely in agreement herewith. The Supreme High Command asked that the representative of the Foreign Office in the General Headquarters be informed of this fact and Captain v. Bülow has done so.

142

Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral v. Holtzendorff, to the Foreign Office

BERLIN, January 28, 1917.

Your Excellency has requested me, through Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm, to agree that as the result of the request made by a German-American, the American Government be informed that we shall continue to carry on the unrestricted U-boat warfare until our enemies shall have returned to a recognition of international law in connection with their conduct of the war upon the sea.

Since your Excellency expects that an announcement of this kind will have a favorable effect upon American opinion, I am willing to agree on this point, on condition that this action, or such proposals and negotiations as may result therefrom, shall have no influence on the carrying out of the unrestricted U-boat warfare.

By a return to the principles of international law, we are to understand that, aside from the observance of the Declaration of London and of the Conventions of Paris and of The Hague, and aside from the removal of all armament from merchant vessels, as well, the following is agreed to:

The cessation of the general commercial warfare which is being carried on against us in so far as it is manifested by direct and indirect enslaving and oppression of the neutral Powers, that is, the giving up of the black lists, the blockade against coal, compulsory voyages in the service of England, and all agreements which interfere with exports from surrounding neutrals or which make importation difficult; return to the contraband list of the

¹ From the records of the Admiralty Staff.

Declaration of London, the cessation of all forceful interference with the mails and attacks upon German private property in the enemies' country, as well as the cessation of all activities whose purpose is to injure Germans living in neutral countries, etc.

With regard to the change in the wording of the note which has been requested, I call attention to the fact that the Austrian Government must immediately be informed of the cancellation of the words "arrived in the vicinity thereof," since otherwise a difference would result in the material part of the notes.

I have addressed a copy of this communication to the Chief of the General Staff.

HOLTZENDORFF.

143

Secretary Zimmermann to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau

Telegram No. 186.

BERLIN, January 28, 1917.

Count Bernstorff telegraphs, wireless, 26th instant, No. 60,¹ as follows:

After having had very important conference, request most urgently postponement until my next two messages received. Suggest reply by wireless.

I propose to answer: "Regret suggestions impracticable."

Chief of the Admiralty Staff agrees with this answer. Kindly obtain the Emperor's orders on the subject after having taken the matter up with the Supreme High Command of the Army.

ZIMMERMANN.

144

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 28, 1917.

Telegram No. 144.

Re telegram No. 186.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),

January 28, 1917.

The Emperor is in agreement with the proposed answer. Supreme High Command also in agreement therewith.

GRÜNAU.

¹ 68, Supplements, pt. II, *ante*, p. 1046.

NUMBER 3

PART IV.—THE FACTS PRECEDING THE DECLARATION OF THE UNRESTRICTED U-BOAT WAR IN JANUARY, 1917

145

Report in the handwriting of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

BERLIN, January 4, 1916.

General v. Falkenhayn made the remark to me on the 30th of December that he could not understand why it was that we did not resume in all severity the U-boat war against England. In response to my remark that a break with America would then be unavoidable, he stated that he could not have run the risk of this break in the late part of the summer, on account of the relations in the Balkans, which at that time were still unsettled, but that now, since we could rely upon Bulgaria, America was no longer in a position to do us injury. That we would be able to overcome the disadvantageous commercial results of such a break, if as a matter of fact there were any real reason for apprehending such result, and that we would also be able to overcome the bad moral effect which this would have on the rest of the neutrals. At the same time, the General was not absolutely sure of his ground.

On the 2d of January, General Falkenhayn had a rather long conference with Minister of State Dr. Helfferich on this question. On this occasion his view was more or less as follows, so the latter informed me. He stated that he could not bring the war to an end by military blows delivered on land. That Helfferich and I had repeatedly expressed to him the opinion that our financial and economic resources would not last much longer than the autumn of 1916, and that it was also possible that the morale of the people would not hold out. If the war was to be ended before that time, the Navy would have to take a hand. That the Navy assured him that within about two months England would be so forced to her knees that she would sue for peace.* That under these circumstances it was a matter of complete indifference to us whether America would declare war. That even if Holland should follow suit, it would be of no significance; that he had enough troops to overrun Holland.

Admiral v. Holtzendorff, whom I interrogated today, gave me the following information:

On December 31 or January 1, General v. Falkenhayn and Admiral v. Tirpitz had had a conference with him and had asked whether England could be forced to sue for peace by an unrestricted U-boat campaign. Mr.

v. Tirpitz answered this question unqualifiedly in the affirmative, after having delivered a criticism retrospective in nature, smacking of self-glorification, and purporting to rout all ideas to the contrary. If, he said, we should start today and envelop England in a U-boat war to be carried on regardless of persons, England would be forced to sue for peace within two months. That we are now supplied with the necessary number of U-boats for this purpose. Admiral v. Holtzendorff does not go so far. He is of the opinion, however, that from the 1st of March on, with the assistance of the U-boats which will be available at that time, there will be enough not only to meet the demands in the Mediterranean and the Baltic, but also to carry on the U-boat war against England with such success that in the course of about four months she would be ready to sue for peace. That this would be upon condition that the U-boats in the war zone would be permitted to bring down all ships, making no distinction between neutral and enemy shipping. But in his opinion this kind of warfare should not be begun before the first of March; that we were not in a position today to judge whether it should be begun even at that time. He was of the opinion that it should only be commenced when it was obvious that a break with the United States could not be avoided, since he did not underestimate the general political and economic results of this break. He did not, however, look upon the break as fatal, since if we should have freedom to carry on the U-boat war, we could defeat both England and America.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

146

*Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral v. Holtzendorff, to Imperial Chancellor
v. Bethmann-Hollweg*

Rec. Berlin, January 9, 1916.
Absolutely confidential.

BERLIN, January 7, 1916.

By way of supplementing my oral remarks with regard to the military effects of the resumption of unrestricted U-boat warfare on the successful termination of the whole war, I have the honor to submit to your kind consideration the reasons which have brought me to the conclusions which I have reached.

The war has now come to the point where the question as to how a favorable outcome can be brought about has attained a singular urgency.

The military successes which have thus far been attained have failed up to the present moment to have the political effects to which they would seem entitled, since no one of our opponents has shown any evidence of willingness to consider them a sufficient reason for taking steps toward the conclusion

of peace. Aside from the attitude of those governments whose steadfast perseverance is indicated by those changes of ministry which have either taken place or are in contemplation, and this is equally true of the parliaments, the above is also manifested in the press as well as in other utterances which are constantly coming to light and which reflect those sources of public opinion in the hostile States which are most entitled to respect, particularly in England.

As regards the question of whether or not a politically decisive move can be carried out either on the eastern or the western battle-front, one may venture to conclude that there are objections to a new offensive on a great scale against Russia or France—objections to be found not only in the extent of the sacrifices to be made, but in the uncertainty of an absolutely overwhelming success. A campaign against the Suez Canal and Egypt, assuming that it can be successfully carried out, is a very far-reaching undertaking, and, in spite of constituting a heavy blow against existing routes of commerce and the moral foundations of England's power, is not of such a nature as to guarantee that this enemy will be forced to sue for peace. But, in addition to the obstinate determination and the century-old sense of domination which characterize the British, the following constitutes a reason against the above assumption—the consideration that every peace whose conditions would appear to mark a defeat on their side, such, for instance, as a condition imposing upon them the payment of a war indemnity, or not involving the unqualified restoration of Belgium to the *status quo ante*, would be viewed as a peril which would jeopardize those principles upon which their existence as a State depends and against which, therefore, they would have to defend themselves to the last. For, in contrast with the Continental Powers, their State is not based upon domestic foundations which have the power to expand from within, but they have made their power as a nation depend upon the over-lordship of colonial possessions subdued by their might, and to their unrestricted imports and exports by sea; so that a terrible blow delivered against the faith of the colonial populations in the unshakable permanence of the British rule and against the safety of the sea routes to India, would make it necessary for England to develop new channels for the maintenance of her existence as a State in the face of extraordinary difficulties. It is this cause, reinforced by the feeling of security of the Englishman living in England, which makes it clear that it is precisely in England and by England (which is constantly drawing on more reserves in the way of men and money) that the hope of the final defeat of the Central Powers is nourished and announced. The opposition of the French is likewise so strengthened in this way that the hope of crippling France can not be considered a certain factor in attempting to foretell the prospects of peace. We can count still less on any readiness for peace on the part of the Russians, if for no other reason than the nature and attitude of the authorities there

who are vested with the power of decision. On the other hand, the longer this war lasts, which constantly and in increasing measure manifests a tendency toward exhaustion, the more serious will become the sacrifice in life and in money, so that a political and financial outlook concerning the further prosecution of the war, and the view of the situation from the standpoint of the possible conclusion of peace, is such as to make it absolutely necessary to put the question to proof as to what means may be adopted for hastening the bringing about of a final decision.

No word need be added by me to bring out the seriousness of the situation.

Once the factor of the possibility of a victory in the war on land against Russia and France is eliminated, there remains the war on the ocean against England, the third of our enemies and, in her position as the soul of the entire opposition, our most dangerous one, in case she, too, can not be conquered on land. The opinion of the Government and public opinion in England is openly attributable, of late at least, to the idea that even a defeat of the French would not bring about a decisive result, but would simply make it necessary for England to take up the admittedly uncomfortable task of blockading the French coast as well; but that no victory on land could do Germany any good as long as it was cut off from intercourse by water and that, under all circumstances, England would be able to guarantee this. The war on the water can not be fought out on purely military grounds, because the English fleet will not take up the gage of decisive battle. The last means left at our disposal is the U-boat war against commerce, which England believes to have brought to an end with the assistance of the United States. The significance thereof is all the greater when we realize that the war of commerce which has been announced by our foes and which is to be carried on after the termination of peace by means of a calculated isolation of Germany, can only be organized by England, and is already being organized, and we must realize also that this dangerous menace is a factor to be reckoned with unless we succeed in avoiding it by concluding a treaty of peace and commerce with England, which can only be done in case of a victorious peace.

The war on commerce would affect England, not only to a very different degree but in a very different way from which it would affect one of the Continental Powers, particularly Germany. England's food supply depends absolutely on the free import of foodstuffs; likewise its industries, with the exception of the coal industry, depend on the free importation of raw materials; the payment for these imports is met by the exportation of industrial products; the uninterrupted operation of this commercial machine constitutes the *sine qua non* of the maintenance of her credit, and, consequently, of the pound sterling as a medium of exchange; this is the fundamental basis of the power and confidence without which London can not exist as the world's money market. All these matters, which do not lose

their importance even in connection with the influx of American gold, have become the essentials of England's existence as a State; so there is no necessity of citing special commercial tendencies on the part of the British as an argument on which to base the all-important necessity of attacking them on the commercial side. And it may further be stated in connection with the foregoing, that England has taken over, as the rôle to be assumed primarily by her, the task of providing both the technical and financial means for carrying out the war. If it is made impossible for her to accomplish this, the enemy organization which threatens us will collapse on this account.

The experiences of the spring and summer of 1915 have given full proof of the fact that a U-boat war upon commerce, carried on with the moderate means at our disposal, and, above all, under constant restrictions made necessary by political considerations, resulted in pressing England very hard. Numerous proofs of this have been gathered during that period and are supported by the expert opinions of expert witnesses of note. The checks upon imports and exports could not, under existing conditions of the conflict, reach the point of laying the foundation for such a shortage as would endanger human life; but on the other hand they have resulted in increases in the price of imports, and in such detriment to exports as to have caused a decline in commercial and monetary credits which has evoked consternation on the part of expert economists even in England itself. The result was a diminution in the value of the local currency which practically approximated a catastrophe and made a very decided impression on the sterling rate of exchange.

In the meantime, the following conditions have developed: cargo space is growing scarce, which has led to unheard-of increases in freight rates; industrial pursuits have fallen off on account of recruiting; and there has been a diminution of local monetary resources; all of which have notably improved the prospects of a new war on commerce. The efforts of the war would be exerted upon an organism which had already been subjected to a weakening process. If after the winter period, that is, under atmospheric conditions to which it is peculiarly adapted, the U-boat war on commerce is undertaken anew with all the means at our disposal and without limitation which will cripple its effectiveness at the very start, then, basing the statement on our earlier experiences, it can be announced with certainty that English opposition will come to an end within six months at the most.

The danger that the resumption of the U-boat war will lead to a break with the United States is certainly entitled to consideration. In any event, it would not seem impossible, in my poor opinion, that the question might reach a stage of negotiation which would result in a check to the hostile attitude of the United States. In support of this, we may point to the fact that Germany has gone very far indeed to meet the standards which the

United States has adopted up to this time, by imposing restrictions upon the U-boat war, and thus has given sufficient indications of its readiness to do full justice to those standards; that on the part of the British, a barbarous method of conducting the war is actually taking root, as was brought to the knowledge of the public on one occasion by the case of the *Baralong*; whereas, on the other side, in spite of a thoroughly disciplined corps of officers, incidents such as the sinking of great passenger steamers can not be wholly avoided; and that, finally, England, in opposition to the expressed attitude of the United States with regard to the international situation, boasts that she has cut off Germany from all intercourse by sea and, indeed, from most intercourse with the contiguous neutral States, and has proceeded more and more toward the view-point that these methods are founded on purely military necessities. If, in spite of the above, it should turn out that war with America could not be avoided, I should feel obliged to suggest the following considerations:

That the armies of our enemies might receive such material reinforcements during the course of the critical half year as to seriously jeopardize the defense of the German positions, is not to be feared. The financial support of England constitutes no real protection against the crippling of its imports and exports and its accompanying economic exhaustion; nor is support in a technical way to any greater degree possible. America's anxiety about Japan would become a reality in case of war. The confiscation of the German merchant ships lying in American harbors would have no effect upon the progress of the war; the serious results which might ensue, so far as regards the time following the conclusion of peace, would be a matter to be taken up in the way of compensation against England in case of a victorious termination of the war. The admittedly unwelcome political results of a break with the United States may be weighed against the advantages to be gotten from the one surviving means of bringing the war to a successful issue within a measurable time. In my opinion, it must be admitted that the scale would tip on the side of the advantages in question; for if we can not win a favorable decision for Germany in this war by, say, the fall of 1916, then the chance of concluding a peace which will for the next decades guarantee to Germany a politically assured existence containing the germs of economic recrudescence and development, will disappear.

A number of the *Times* which has just come to my knowledge contains articles on the question of the war on commerce, concerning which the enclosure comments in brief.

V. HOLTZENDORFF.

*Secretary of State of the Imperial Marine Service v. Tirpitz to Imperial
Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg*

Rec. Berlin, February 13, 1916.
Autograph.

BERLIN, *February 13, 1916.*

I have the honor to submit to your Excellency in all respect, the enclosed memorial. It includes in the form of a general survey the answers submitted by me to the latest inquiries of your Excellency.

In view of the military significance of the matters under discussion, I have felt it incumbent upon me to deliver a copy to the Chief of the General Staff of the Armies in the Field and to the Chief of the Admiralty Staff.

V. TIRPITZ.

[ENCLOSURE]

Can England be forced to sue for peace by means of a U-boat war?

I. The most important and surest means which can be adopted to bring England to her knees is the use of our U-boats at the present time. We shall not be able to defeat England by a war on land alone. The unrestricted carrying out of the U-boat war, supported by our other naval craft and by our air fleet—all under a unified and determined leadership—is of the most decisive importance in obtaining the desired result. England will be cut to the heart by the destruction by U-boats of every ship which approaches the English coast. The ocean's commerce is the very elixir of life for England, its interruption for any length of time a deadly danger, its permanent interruption absolutely fatal within a short time. Every attack upon England's transoceanic communication is therefore a blow in the direction of the termination of the war. The more the losses take place with merciless regularity at the very gates of the island kingdom, the more powerful will be the material and moral effect on the English people. In spite of its former resources, England will not be able to make a successful defense against the attacks of submarines directed against its transoceanic commerce, provided they are well planned. That is precisely why a timely U-boat war is the most dangerous and, if vigorously carried on, the form of warfare which will unconditionally decide the war to England's disadvantage.

II. The prerequisites of a successful carrying out of an unrestricted U-boat war are military and economic. In both respects they are noticeably more favorable than in February, 1915.

1. On the 18th of February, 1915, the U-boat war was begun with a force of twenty-one boats. This number increased during the summer months to thirty-five boats on the average. In the spring months, there were about

25 per cent of the boats in the water and from June on, nearly 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. In spite of the restrictions which, in view of the attitude of the United States, were adopted at a very early date, the effect of this U-boat war was very great and was steadily increasing. The economic life of England was struck at its most vulnerable point, and came quickly to be marked by uncertainty and nervousness. We are informed through trustworthy sources of information that about 2,000 craft, mostly fishing schooners, were converted for the purpose of defense against U-boat attacks, that they were withdrawn from the merchant fleet and had to be manned with a comparatively large number of military specialists. In the month of February, thirty-eight boats were at our disposal for the purposes of the new U-boat war against England, including service in the Mediterranean. Their number was increased to fifty in April, and from that time on has been augmented by about ten boats a month. Our losses in boats can probably be put at from two to three every month at the beginning, and later at four or five a month. These numbers constitute a high estimate, if we take into consideration that in the future U-boats will be able to carry on their warfare without the order to come to the surface. Just exactly what the results of such an unrestricted U-boat warfare will turn out to be it is impossible to calculate on a numerical basis at this time, as we have never entered upon such a war before. We must also bear in mind that as the result of the institution of the first U-boat war, England has had the opportunity of making more effective disposition of the cargo space now at its disposal, so that the effects of the new U-boat war will not become immediately apparent to their fullest extent. At the same time, England's loss in tonnage by sinking will far exceed 300,000 tons a month, according to very conservative estimates. As a result of statistics which have been furnished him, the Chief of the Admiralty Staff estimates this amount, in general terms, at about 630,000 tons a month, if we include all possible war areas. The difference is to be explained in this way: my estimate is based on an enumeration limited to the actual war area, that is to say, English waters, and not on all possible areas of war; and also on the further fact that I have taken into consideration the necessary result of the losses which are expected to occur inside the war area following upon the initiation of unrestricted U-boat warfare, to wit, the diminution of intercourse by sea with England, etc. (compare number 3).

2. The general economic situation of England, too, to the extent that its existence depends upon transoceanic intercourse, offers materially better opportunity for quick action towards a decisive result through the unrestricted application of the U-boat weapon than in February, 1915.

At the present time and in the present condition of combined world commerce, the opportunities for cargo space have notably diminished, whereas the demand therefor has increased to an enormous extent. This

increased demand is the result of the necessity of importing war material of all kinds and of the military transportation of our enemies to the various war areas. The great diminution in cargo space is due to the removal of the German merchant fleet from the commerce of the world, also to the fact that a certain portion of our enemy's merchant ships are tied up at docks, for instance, Russian and English ships in the Black Sea, and, above all, to the losses which the British merchant fleet has suffered from the war on commerce and the U-boat war which has been carried on up to the present time, as well as the inroads made upon the British merchant marine for war purposes. According to *Lloyd's Register*, the gross tonnage of England's merchant fleet (without her colonies) was carried in the year 1914 at about 18.7 million. The losses which have occurred up to this time must be numbered at about 1.8 million tons, according to the reports which have reached us, most of them originating in English sources. According to the tactics pursued in English circles, the effect of which is to maintain a strong censorship on the publication of losses, we will not go astray if we figure the total losses of the British up to the present time as exceeding 2 million tons. It has been entirely beyond the power of England to replace such losses through ship-building or through the purchase of neutral ships, even to an approximate extent.

England's tonnage for war purposes, whether in the form of ships and craft taken over as auxiliary cruisers or transports, is calculated in technical publications to be about 5 million tons.

With this diminution in tonnage of about 5 million and with the war losses of about 2 million tons, there would result a total shrinkage of about 7 million tons. The tonnage of the craft taken for U-boat defense, of the British ships tied up, etc., is not included here. The total tonnage of the British merchant fleet is therefore—and at a moderate estimate—cut down by more than a third. The result of this great shortage in cargo capacity upon the economic life of England has manifested itself of late by an increase in freight rates proceeding by leaps and bounds, and, hand in hand therewith, by an increase in the value of materials necessary to sustain life and of raw-stuffs for industrial purposes. Whereas, for example, the freight for wheat from Argentina to England stood at the end of July, 1914, at 12 shillings per ton, it had risen to 150 shillings a ton by the middle of January, 1916. At the same time, the freight from the northern ports of the United States to England stood at 75 shillings per ton as contrasted with 10 shillings at the end of July, 1914, coal freights from Cardiff to Genoa and Port Said—that is, to the Mediterranean—78 shillings against 7 shillings at the end of July, 1914, and the coal freight rates from Newcastle to Genoa 85 shillings (even 95 shillings today) against 7½ shillings.

3. The full effect to be expected from this kind of warfare would not be limited to merely bringing about a further marked shrinkage as the result

of sinking in the course of an unrestricted U-boat war (compare figure 1). The result would be that, in the course of such a war, sea trade with England would continue to become less and less. This tonnage which would be withdrawn from the total amount of shipping space on which England would expect to rely, either through being led off in the direction of other trade routes or through being tied up at anchor, represents a further loss, at least just as effective as the tonnage which will be permanently destroyed by sinkings.

This marked shrinkage in shipping space would strike England in a vital spot, and would not only and in ever-increasing volume lead to the point of absolute shortage, but would in the end bring about a situation of dearth and want with regard to those materials which are absolutely essential and finally destroy the economic existence of England. And, moreover, it would exercise such a baneful influence upon those factors upon the existence of which the conduct of war directly depends, that, according to my view and the opinion of the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, if we were to adopt at once the unrestricted use of the U-boat weapon, England would find herself in such a position that she would have to give in by the fall of this year.

England herself clearly recognizes and apprehends the fatal effects of the conduct *à l'outrance* of a U-boat war suddenly thrust upon her, and all the more so because these effects were beginning to tell last year when it was decided that the U-boat war would have to be stopped. The latest view expressed by Sir Edward Grey with regard to maintaining the blockade with increased severity was unquestionably the result of apprehensions entertained with regard to the effects of the U-boat war, a retaliatory measure against the measures which were being considered in connection with such blockade. Moreover, England, by diplomatic negotiations and aided by her American friendship, is undoubtedly straining every nerve to deprive us of this weapon. The latest attitude assumed by the United States in the *Lusitania* question, as well as Lansing's note with regard to the war on commerce, are acts which bear the obvious stamp of an understanding with England.

III. In order to get the correct view of America's attitude in the U-boat question, it is necessary to go back over its development during the course of the war.

From the very beginning, the attitude of the United States toward us has not been a friendly one. The close racial feeling which bound the greater part of the population to England, together with the combinations of English and American economic forces which have constantly resulted in more and more intimate relations in this direction, necessarily resulted in the antagonism referred to. In spite of this, there existed in the beginning, at least so far as the government was concerned, a certain objection against openly taking sides with either party. If from the date of the February

note onward, we could have afforded to pay no attention at all to the objections urged by the United States against the U-boat war, the unrestricted conduct of this war would not, in my opinion, have led to a break with the United States. In view of the restrictions imposed upon the conduct of the U-boat war and of the enormous deliveries of ammunition and war material of every kind which was made possible thereby, the whole economic life of the United States, and the American policy as well, came to be connected with the British cause in a manner quite different from that existing at the beginning of the war. America is directly interested in the fate of England's economic existence, and, as a logical consequence, in England's intention to crush Germany. As a result, the conviction on the part of Americans of the growing dangers involved in Japan's hostile attitude, and that sooner or later differences with Japan will be bound to ensue, has become stronger as the war has run its course. Understandings unquestionably exist to-day, if not between the two governments, at least, in any case, between the leaders of the trusts in England and America, whose purpose is to give Japan a very definite setback by means of the combined forces of England and the United States after the war. But this is possible only if England can be absolutely secured against any danger emanating from Europe, that is, if Germany is overpowered. It follows that the United States, whether they desire to be so or not, are directly interested in our defeat, and have become a direct enemy of Germany.

If the United States intends to push this position to its logical conclusion and to let matters come to a break with us, the resulting circumstances would suffer no material change, provided this break were limited to a refusal to maintain diplomatic relations. But if the United States should go as far as to declare war against us, then the problem of shipping space would occupy a prominent place among those questions on which we would have to pass in connection with the then newly created situation. The assistance in men and material with which the United States would then be in a position to provide England and our other opponents would, as a practical proposition, be measured by the amount of tonnage for commercial purposes actually at their disposal.

The attempt on the part of the United States to increase this tonnage to any appreciable extent through a retaliatory seizure of the German commercial tonnage within their reach would, in the first place, be confronted with quite substantial obstacles and, in the second place, be useless in any case.

The gross tonnage of German steamers now in the United States amounts to 440,000 tons, according to my estimate. There are about 116,850 gross tons in the American colonies.

The possibility of including for these purposes such ships as are within reach of the United States depends primarily on whether and to what

extent these ships are, in any case, convertible. A circumstance which would call for far more serious consideration would be the question as to whether the United States could provide the very large personnel which would be required for the manning of these ships. This personnel is not available. The naval personnel of all countries, not excepting England, has been subjected to the heaviest possible strain. Even in times of peace, the United States has experienced a very definite shortage in naval personnel drawn from its own population. And, finally, the conversion of the German ships could be made very difficult if not positively impossible by the destruction or removal of the more important parts of the machinery.

But assuming that, in spite of all this, the United States should succeed in placing the German merchant ships in their service, the personal interests of the country would make it necessary for these ships to be held for their own purposes. So that an advantage to England or a lightening of England's burdens would not result from this situation.

Were America, after a break with us, to provide financial support in ever-increasing volume to England and our opponents, the only result for the latter would be that they would become more and more dependent upon the United States. And moreover, the practical effect of such financial support would, for the most part, take the form of possibly providing them with increased shipments of war material of all kinds which were not obtainable in their own country, and of supplying them with those articles essential to their economic life. But this possibility can only become an established fact if the shipments in question can actually be delivered. For instance, an increase in Italy's financial resources for the purpose of obtaining coal does not actually bring coal to the country. And so an increased financial support of our opponents by America would, in the last analysis, for its effective working out, be inseparably and mainly dependent upon the problem of tonnage.

IV. So far as concerns the possible disadvantages of an unrestricted U-boat war due to the attitude of the remaining neutrals, such as Holland and Denmark, it will be borne in mind that during the entire war, and in ever-increasing degree, these States have, to our detriment, remained quiet under the worst inflictions of England's arbitrary power, so that we have no occasion to tie our hands through any consideration for the neutral Powers.

Military reactions of a decisive nature on the part of these countries are absolutely out of the question.

V. With regard to supplementing the tremendous results of the war on land, we have the following:

1. The entrance of America into the list of our opponents would be of no definite assistance to England.

2. It is only by making the fullest use of all of our instrumentalities adapted to warfare on the sea, amongst which the U-boats will play an

important part by shutting England off from all intercourse by sea, that it will be possible to bring about England's defeat.

BERLIN, *February 8, 1916.*

Chief of the General Staff, General v. Falkenhayn to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Opinion on the Belgian and U-boat questions.

Rec. Berlin, February 15, 1916.

Strictly confidential.

Written by an officer. GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *February 13, 1916.*

On the occasion of our conferences in Pless, your Excellency requested my opinion with regard to the Belgian and the U-boat questions. Bearing in mind the importance of the situation, I have the honor to again state my answers here in brief form:

1. Regarding the future of Belgium, no doubt can be entertained on the point that the country must remain at our disposal both as a place of assembly for the troops required for the protection of the most important German industrial regions, and as a hinterland for the base on the coast of Flanders, which is absolutely indispensable for the purposes of our fleet.

This demand of course involves the necessity of the exercise of an unconditional military dominion of Germany over Belgium, inclusive of the control of the railroads and the roads, the latter of course being inseparable from the first.

The methods to be adopted by means of which this result will be secured may differ strongly in their nature. They will depend to a preponderating extent upon the circumstances under which we shall be able to conclude peace with the western Powers. So it necessarily follows that we shall not be justified in tying our hands with regard to Belgium prior to considering the conditions on which a general peace depends. But, in any event, this is by no means disadvantageous for Belgium. On the contrary, Belgium would be crossing the Rubicon by coming over to our side. It is certain that the sooner the crossing is accomplished and the greater the benefits accruing to us, the more friendly will be the spirit in which we shall approach Belgium on the subject of the methods to be pursued, including those adopted in connection with the exercise of military supremacy. The main point, which consists in making Belgium militarily safe for the Central Powers in accordance with the general outlines above set forth, remains a *sine qua non* so far as the Central Powers are concerned.

Without this condition, Germany's war in the west is lost.

2. The above statement answers, in the main, the other question which was raised by your Excellency. Just as the war must be considered as lost for us if we do not insist upon the incorporation of Belgium into our "concern," will it be lost to England if she has to put up with such a change. In other words, England is now in the position where she can only act as we have acted, that is, she must fight out the war to the bitter end. The objection which, in spite of this, has often been made to the so-called unrestricted U-boat war, to wit, that England would not be driven to desperate measures until the U-boats were brought into play, is devoid of all justification. Judged from the military standpoint, this objection is, as it stands, incapable of being sustained for a moment. But if this reasoning were to apply (which, as a matter of fact, it does not), far from weakening my stand on this question, it would make it all the stronger.

For the unrestricted U-boat war is the only instrumentality of warfare by the application of which England would undoubtedly be cut straight to the heart; I assume that the efficiency of the means must be admitted, in accordance with the official opinion of the Chief of the Admiralty Staff. The advantage which the *certainly* of overcoming England would bring us can not be outweighed by the disadvantage of the *possibility* of complications with neutrals resulting therefrom. And all the less would it be outweighed by such a possibility, since the realization of the possibility could, in all probability, be held in check by adequate political and diplomatic measures, if taken in time; as a matter of fact, it might be rendered harmless thereby. To be sure, the preparation for these measures should not be carried on in the spirit expressed in the writings of our Minister at The Hague, contained in his memorial which has been brought to my attention and which betrays an entire misconception of the essential aspects of the present war.

For the above reasons, it is my opinion that those who are conducting this war have not the right to refuse to make use of U-boat warfare. If the above is true, it is equally true that those who are conducting the country's policy have not the right to forbid to the War Department the use of those instrumentalities of war which are necessary to bring about victory.

It is only necessary to picture our probable economic situation next winter, assuming that we have made no use of the U-boat war, in order to test the soundness of the assertion which has just been made. Whether we shall be faced with such a situation is another question. I do not believe so. For I believe that it is certain that even during the gradual approach to a critical stage during the course of the next few months, force of circumstances will bring those elements which are most actively opposing us at present to agree to the U-boat war. But in such case, it will no longer be the terrible weapon against the English that it is today. Instead of the mighty blow which we are now in a position to deliver, we shall have nothing

but a weak parry to offer. To allow such a situation to develop would be tantamount to refusing to act according to our best traditions or in accordance with sane principles of warfare, and, in the last analysis, would not preserve us from complications with evilly-disposed neutral Powers.

Therefore, basing my statements on the calls of both duty and conscience, I consider it essential to start upon a course of unrestricted U-boat warfare as soon as it is possible to do so, that is, according to the report of the Navy, from the middle of March on.

V. FALKENHAYN.

Memorial of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

BERLIN, February 29, 1916.

The announcement of the U-boat war carried on in conformity with the desires of the Admiralty Staff, that is, torpedoing freight steamers and passenger steamers without distinction and without warning, whether sailing under a neutral or hostile flag, would certainly result in the entrance of the United States into the war on the side of our enemies.

And this result would by no means be altered by possible limitations in favor of normal American commerce by sea. They might, at the very most, postpone the determination of the United States to a certain extent. On the other hand, the navy expects that, as the result of its policy, England will be eliminated as a belligerent within a period of from six to eight months. The Supreme High Command has announced its opinion to the effect that, since Austria-Hungary's power of endurance will hardly extend beyond the year 1916, every available means ought to be used to bring the war to an end before that time.

Assuming that these premises are correct, the issue to be decided is whether or not we should adopt the policy of unrestricted U-boat warfare; and hence the following questions must be considered:

1. Is it certain that the new U-boat war will bring about a shrinkage in the cargo capacity of the English fleet as it now exists, by approximating 4 million tons, within the period set out above, in accordance with the expectations of Admiral v. Holtzendorff?

2. Can we assume with certainty that the hoped-for losses to the English merchant marine will force England to sue for peace?

3. What results will the expected entrance of the neutrals, and in particular that of the United States, have upon the war?

I

The question as to how many ships will be sunk as the result of the contemplated U-boat war is one for the naval expert to answer. In the meantime, the very difference in the estimate of the tonnage to be destroyed monthly, which is given by Admiral v. Holtzendorff as 630,000 tons, whereas Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz gives a distinctly smaller estimate, although not precisely expressed, numerically speaking, indicates of itself that the bases of these estimates are uncertain. They consist in applying arithmetically the results obtained from the U-boat war and from the war of mines in the North Sea and in the Mediterranean, to the new U-boat war.

These estimates have failed to take into account—

1. The effect of new instruments of defense against U-boats which England, with the question of its existence at stake, will, in the course of a half year, unquestionably be able to devise and certainly will devise.

2. The increase in new ships constructed, which in the year 1915 amounted to about 650,000 tons.

3. The retaliatory measures which will be taken on German merchant tonnage lying in neutral ports, which, if the United States breaks with us, will be released to the advantage of England. There are about 11⁷/₁₀ millions of tons of such cargo space tied up in the United States, Norway, Holland, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Africa, Asia and in the ports of the southern Pacific. In spite of all difficulties which are put in their way, our opponents will in any event be able to make use of at least a portion of this tonnage during the passage of a half year.

According to the above, it is beyond doubt that, even if 4 million tons should be sunk inside of six months, England's available cargo space would not be reduced by this amount, but by one materially smaller.

Viewed as a whole, the calculations of the loss in English cargo space which is to be brought about are based on unstable foundations. And still more uncertain is the estimate of the effect which this shrinkage will have upon England's determination and capacity to fight.

II

We are not provided with authentic figures regarding the commercial tonnage which is now available to England. Even if the latest announcements of Mr. Runciman in the lower House—and they materially support estimates from other sources which I have before me—England's merchant tonnage has been diminished by one third, and at the present time there are still available for the necessities of England's commerce 13 to 14 million tons, of which 9 million are English ships and from 4 to 5 million are ships of neutral Powers. In all probability, this number is even greater, as this calculation is only based upon English tonnage at the time of the outbreak

of the war. That this tonnage can be decreased to the extent of 4 million by fall is not probable, according to the statements under No. 1, and most certainly is not assured. But even if this could be accomplished, we are left with nothing more than an assumption that this shrinkage would be sufficient to make England sue for peace. England has come to face economic difficulties of an extraordinary kind through the increase in freight rates and the difficulties of exportation. The shortage in cargo space has done much to bring this about, but it does not constitute the sole cause. Poor organization, as well as obstacles in port and labor matters, have played their part. If the cargo capacity is further decreased as the result of the contemplated U-boat war, England's dangers will be accentuated. But before England is brought to the state of capitulation—and this is the real point at issue—she will leave no stone unturned in the effort to overcome her difficulties. If better management with regard to available cargo capacity, limitations on the exportation of those materials which are absolutely essential to the peoples' existence as well as to the continuation of the war, will be able to bring about a certain degree of relief, it is equally true that the British Government has at its disposal, because of the voluntary or enforced relinquishment of the Saloniki project, the means whereby so much tonnage may be reconverted to the purposes of its commerce as to counterbalance in great measure corresponding losses inflicted by the U-boat war.

In view of the limited number of our U-boats and of their inability to be efficient at night, an absolute cutting off of England is out of the question. Whether with or without convoy, England will always be able to get a certain number of ships through the wide meshes of our U-boat net, and through our mine fields under all circumstances and eventually by way of France. Even if we leave out of consideration the grain reserves which are at England's disposal, by cutting down consumption to an extent not at all approaching the limit of endurance, the arrival of four or five ships a day of average size will be sufficient to meet England's needs in the way of breadstuff.

Taking everything into consideration, it is true that the loss to England's cargo space which is to be expected, will be damaging, but it will not result in making it impossible for England to continue to carry on the war until fall, and thereby force England to sue for peace. For we must not shut our eyes to this: If the U-boat war is announced and carried out in conformity with established plans, and if, as the consequence thereof, America goes over to the camp of our enemies, a peace forced upon England by the U-boat war would be equivalent to public acknowledgment that England's supremacy at sea had been destroyed by Germany's sea power. Before England would make up her mind to make such an acknowledgment, she would sacrifice the last man and the last penny. But if the matter stands so, then

those disadvantages which we ourselves will suffer as the result of a break with the United States must be weighed in the balance against the losses which England will have suffered through U-boat war.

III

That the break with America will come if we announce and carry on the U-boat war in accordance with the plans now under consideration, is beyond question, in view of the attitude which the Union has maintained up to this time and the stand that she takes on the question of armed merchant ships. Negotiations with the United States with regard to the details of carrying on such a war by us are out of the question, because no decision would be reached concerning them, if at all, until months would have passed. We would have to reject the protests which we have every reason to expect from America as the result of our announcement. The moment that we rejected them would be the moment of the break.

The break with America will have the following results:

1. The cause of our enemies will receive a new and enormous moral support through America's public entrance into the enemy's camp. The confidence in a victorious termination of the war would be revived, and the will to endure would be strengthened. Strong points of difference existing in inner circles of the Entente, as is now publicly known, would vanish in a flash, and the hope that even now predominates with regard to the attitude of France and Russia—that a war of exhaustion will be carried through, will be realized almost to the point of certainty if the one existing world Power that still remains neutral unites its interests with theirs.

2. The irritation of the neutral States against the arbitrary attitude of England is on the constant increase, but it will be dissipated at that moment when England, certain of American support, needs no longer exercise restraint in applying its oppressive measures.

3. The impression which the entrance of the United States into the war would be bound to make upon our allies is a matter entitled to the most earnest consideration. Baron Burian has stated again and again that we should not so conduct the U-boat war in the Mediterranean as to bring about a break with the United States. He has now even gone so far as to postpone the war against armed enemy merchant vessels as the result of American protests. Unless we can prove to the exclusion of all doubt on the part of the Vienna Cabinet that we can look forward to the overthrow of England, we shall have to consider as an element of our calculations the fact that they will object to the resumption of a U-boat war of such a nature as to bring about a break with the United States—a war which we as faithful allies would have to announce previously to Vienna. At the very least, Austria's war spirit, which is beginning to be sated after the overthrow of Serbia and Montenegro, and which even today gives evidence of a strong

pro-English feeling, will not be heightened as the result of a break with the United States.

The Turkish Minister, too, has already expressed his earnest solicitude about the possible results of a break with the United States.

These objections naturally apply to Bulgaria as well.

Even the moral effects of the break with the United States upon our allies, and our opponents the neutrals, must not be underestimated. The longer the war lasts, so much clearer does it become that he will win the war who keeps his nerves under best control. History teaches us that in coalition wars which can not be brought to a termination by decisive strokes of the military arm, the end is usually brought about by differences between the allies themselves. It is a dangerous gamble to disregard these differences if one is not assured of success.

Then, again, the morale in Germany is not to be judged merely by the articles of the pan-German press. The overwhelming preponderance of our enemies has prevented us up to the present time from bringing the war to a triumphant termination. People will ask whether the increase of the number of our enemies could not have been avoided, and the entrance of the United States into the war will have a discouraging and depressing effect in broad circles of the German people.

The break with America will have the following practical consequences:

1. The attempts made by the Allies up to the present time to obtain money from the United States have only had a very mediocre result. If America breaks with us, then, driven on as a matter of prestige and in deference to its own material interests, it will exert all of its resources to the end that the war shall be rapidly terminated in favor of the Entente. All of its financial resources will be put at the disposal of the Entente, and England will gladly include in the bargain the results of its financial dependence on the United States which, as it is, has already come to pass, if she can only succeed in cementing together the entire Anglo-Saxon world in one military brotherhood, united for the purpose of our destruction. Even if money alone can not determine the outcome of the war, the financial aid proffered by the United States will constitute a very material increase of our opponents' resources.

The assertion which is made so often, that financial assistance afforded by America will avail England nothing if England is cut off from the outer world through the U-boat war, and as a result would be unable to make any use of American gold, is based upon the premise that England will be separated from the rest of the world as if by an iron curtain as the result of the U-boat war. This assumption is inaccurate and is not entertained by the Admiralty Staff.

2. The provisioning of Belgium and of the north of France by means of American foodstuffs will cease. The pending negotiations concerning the

supplying of Poland will be broken off. The Governor General of Belgium has stated, to be sure, that, in case the new harvest did not fall short, he could at a pinch get along with local products up to January 1, 1917. After all, this point is not decisive. Still matters in the rear of our front will reach a very uncertain stage if the Belgians are obliged to go hungry.

3. Military assistance on the part of the United States gives our military authorities very little concern; but it can scarcely be doubted that participation by the United States in this war would necessarily bring about the supplying of our opponents with further war material, particularly of such a kind as that on which the United States, at least outwardly up to this time and on grounds of international law, has imposed limitations, such, for instance, as the direct delivery of U-boats. Moreover, no one who is acquainted with American conditions will entertain any doubt that the American sporting spirit, based upon its English prototype, would result in bringing over to our opponents volunteer contingents which one can surely venture to estimate at a few hundred thousands.

4. (Comments about the European neutrals follow.)

The watchful and vacillating attitude of Roumania will be influenced in the direction of friendship toward the Allies through a break with the United States. It is her intention to take sides with the conqueror. As the King himself says, "Bratianu believes that we must succumb to exhaustion." As soon as it becomes obvious to Roumania that more or less everyone is turning away from us, that the blockading ring is constantly closing in upon us, then she will give us up for hopelessly lost, and act accordingly. As results which may be awaited with certainty following the break with the United States brought about by the U-boat war, I may mention the following: a coalition against us of almost all the neutral States of any consequence, the menace of war from the Kingdoms of Holland and Denmark, and a notable accentuation of our economic difficulties; on the other hand, an important reinforcement of the military, commercial and economic resources of our opponents. The question as to whether or not we would be in the position to carry out the war to a victorious conclusion, even in the face of these overpowering circumstances, must have to be answered in the negative after due deliberation. And moreover, we must add to this that we are not fighting alone and that we are not entitled to calculate upon a similar measure of stubborn resistance on the part of our allies commensurate with that which we would still, in all probability, be able ourselves to exert if driven to desperation.

So the question comes down to this, whether our position is so desperate that we are bound to play a win-all lose-all game in which our existence as a world Power and our whole future as a nation would be at stake, whereas the chances of winning, that is, the prospect of crushing England by next fall, are uncertain. This question is to be answered unqualifiedly in the negative.

The Supreme High Command of the Army denies the possibility of bringing the war to an end through crushing blows delivered by our land forces. That body entertains the belief that a termination of the war is in any event only possible after England or we ourselves have been crushed to the ground. No human being can state with absolute certainty that this point of view is erroneous. As a matter of fact, it is sustained by the assertions of Mr. Asquith and of Mr. Sazonoff. But just as impossible is it for us to deny, with the certainty of being correct, the possibility of ending the war even without the application of the unrestricted U-boat warfare in the course of the year 1916. It is certainly reasonable to argue that our military successes in the west, the failure of the great and long-heralded enemy offensives in the spring, the increasing financial straits of the Entente, and the absence of all prospects of starving us out in the current year, will so increase the general recognition of the fact in England that the prolongation of the war is a bad business, even from the standpoint of British interests, as to make England desist from attempting to carry on the war to the point of our exhaustion. We are cutting ourselves off from the benefits of all these possibilities if, through the adoption of unrestricted U-boat warfare, we drive the United States, and with the United States still other neutral Powers, into making war upon us. Only then will a state of affairs come into being, for which we alone are responsible, on account of which there will be no alternative but to fight the war through to the bitter end, come what may. Therefore there devolves upon us the task of carrying on the U-boat war in such a way as to make it possible to avoid the break with the United States. In this case, we shall be able to list as pure profit all the injuries which we inflict upon England. That these injuries are not inconsiderable is evidenced by the results of the restricted U-boat war carried on since the summer of 1915. The increased number of U-boats which are now at our disposal would increase results many times over.

IV

In all probability, we shall be able to avoid the break with the United States if we carry on the U-boat war, so far as American interests are concerned, within the limits of international law and in accordance with the guarantee in the premises hitherto made to the American Government. Under these conditions, four possibilities of using the submarine exist, namely:

1. War on commerce against enemy and neutral merchant ships on all the seas;
2. Mine warfare about the enemy coasts;
3. Unrestricted U-boat war against *armed* enemy ships on all the seas;
4. Unrestricted U-boat war against *unarmed* enemy freighters in the sea war areas surrounding Great Britain and Ireland.

With regard to No. 1:

The war on commerce will be carried on against hostile merchant ships in general and against neutral merchant ships carrying contraband. It assumes that ships shall not be destroyed without warning and without means adopted for saving human life, provided they do not take to flight or offer resistance. Moreover, according to the provisions of Articles 49 and 50 of the Declaration of London regarding the laws of sea warfare, neutral ships can be sunk only if at least half the cargo of the ship in question consists of contraband, and to bring it into port would subject the submarine to a risk or might jeopardize the success of its operations.

With regard to No. 2:

The Hague Convention of October 18, 1907, relating to mines leaves our submarines practically a free hand in the matter of laying mines about hostile coasts. Article 2, according to which mines might not be laid for the purposes of a commercial blockade, was rejected by several of the great Powers, amongst whom were Germany and France.

With regard to No. 3:

The war against armed enemy ships, which, as stated in the German memorial of February 8, 1916, are according to international law to be regarded as belligerents, imposes, in contrast to the laws of the war on commerce, no obligation upon our submarines to give warning or to take steps for the saving of human lives.

With regard to No. 4:

The war against unarmed enemy freighters in the sea war areas designated in the announcement of the Admiralty Staff of February 4, 1915, is justified as a retaliatory measure against England's policy of starvation. On the other hand, it would not be permissible to submit unarmed enemy freighters outside of such restricted areas to similar treatment, particularly in the Mediterranean, since guarantees in a contrary sense have been given by Germany as well as Austria-Hungary covering this field.

A U-boat war carried on within the limitations which have just been set out could, in all probability, be prosecuted by Germany without any break with the United States, although the following objections would still exist.

A. According to the last announcements of the American Government, it seems doubtful that, during the war, it will accept the German view of the belligerent character of armed merchant ships. In view of the fact that Secretary of State Lansing publicly recognizes the fundamental justification of this attitude, this difference of opinion could scarcely lead to war, provided that in every individual case we were able to furnish proof of the fact that the ship which had been sunk was armed. In case no agreement could be reached with regard to the question of proofs, it is very probable that a break could be avoided by the designation of an international commission

of investigation in accordance with the third title of the Hague Arbitration Convention of October 18, 1907. Our guarantee, given during the *Lusitania* negotiations, not to attack passenger ships without warning and without taking proper measures for the saving of human lives, provided that they do not take to flight or offer resistance, is not opposed to our policy, since this guarantee had no application whatsoever to passenger ships which were also armed for purposes of offense. In the meantime, it is essential that *Lusitania* cases, even if an armed liner is involved, be not repeated. A new *Lusitania* case would, under any and all conditions, bring about a break with the United States. A strict order that liners are not to be sunk, even if they are armed, is therefore absolutely essential to an understanding with the United States. Such an order would not have a definitely detrimental effect upon the practical results of the U-boat war.

B. A war of retaliation against enemy freighters in the restricted areas might lead to complications with the United States Government, if American sailors had taken service on these ships or if they were laden with American goods. At the same time, American sailors, by signing up with an enemy freighter, occupy such a peculiar relation of dependence to the State whose flag is flown, that they must share the fate of the ship in the capacity of enemy crews; and again, American goods on enemy ships are subject to being sunk at once with the ship even under the laws of the war on commerce, according to the principles of international law, so that the circumstances of the sinking would give rise to no just ground of complaint. Moreover, so far as the restricted areas are concerned, we gave the United States Government guarantees which apply only to passenger ships without that Government's demanding similar guarantees in favor of freighters; so that it is unlikely that it would subsequently include freighters.

Then again, dangerous complications would arise with the United States if, in the destruction of merchant ships, our submarines were to go beyond the limits laid down; that is, if they were to confuse unarmed ships with armed ships, passenger steamers with freight steamers, neutral ships with enemy ships, and in this way injure American interests. Isolated cases occurring from time to time could undoubtedly be settled by means of apology and indemnities; on the other hand, the occurrence of numerous cases would undoubtedly be looked upon as the result of intention and would certainly lead to a break. It would seem, therefore, that if this last is to be avoided, it is essential that the orders issued to the under-sea boats be such as to guarantee the exclusion of such mistakes of identity.

What has been said with regard to America in the course of the above is, generally speaking, applicable to the other neutral States, at least in case their ships should be repeatedly sunk by mistake. On the other hand, the same result is not to be readily assumed if their nationals or their goods come to harm on enemy ships. In any case, up to the present time claims

of this kind have not been submitted, or at least, if submitted, have not been pressed; in any event, it remains to be proved whether matters will be allowed to take their course in this connection if a break with the United States should come from a similar cause.

No announcement is an essential preliminary to the launching of a U-boat war to be carried on according to these rules. It can be ordered to commence at once, and, in connection with the exploits which we hope to accomplish in the various theaters of war on land, will have more permanent and, for us, more fortunate results than a U-boat war which is followed by a break with so much of the world as still remains neutral, and according to all probability will lead us, not to victory, but to our ruin.

We can not assume that the existing difference with regard to armed merchant ships will lead to a break with America. But if it does so, that will be a working out of destiny from which we can not escape. For we can not avoid treating as ships of war enemy merchant ships which are provided with orders to attack, and with arms as well, because of the caprice of President Wilson. To give in on this point would not be consonant with our dignity, and would amount to a practical renunciation of the U-boat weapon. If the break should follow, then the unrestricted U-boat war against England and America would result. Whether this should be followed up by the blockading of Holland and of the Scandinavian kingdoms against England, can be determined only by taking into consideration the conditions under which the break with the United States shall have taken place. In any event, our position with regard to the rest of the Allies would be a more favorable one, coming as the result of a break brought about by the United States, than if the break had been brought about by us through our adoption of the new unrestricted U-boat warfare, which would be looked upon by all those neutrals who should suffer from its severity, in the light of a challenge issued to all alike.

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*Personal letter of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Secretary of State
v. Jagow*

Rec. Berlin, March 7, 1916.

CHARLEVILLE, March 5, 1916.

DEAR MR. V. JAGOW:

On the evening of the 2d instant, I handed over my memorial to His Majesty, without going into the subject itself, after I had learned beforehand in the course of a long conversation, that Falkenhayn was stubbornly sticking to his point. On the 3d, after breakfast, His Majesty told me that

he fully agreed with the stand taken in the memorial. That we had far too few U-boats to overcome Great Britain, and that he would not permit the "folly" of provoking America into a war. That I should be quite without care in the matter, as he would arrange everything satisfactorily with Falkenhayn and Holtzendorff. In his marginal notes, which I have not seen as yet, it is said that His Majesty has added considerable emphasis to the principal assertions of the memorial. His Majesty expressed himself very unreservedly with regard to the articles of Reventlow, and asked how it was possible, anyway, that articles so invasive of his rights as the Commander in Chief could be published. I told His Majesty the truth regarding the press bureau of the Imperial Navy Department, and asked that this bureau be transferred to the Admiralty Staff, in accordance with a definite agreement with Holtzendorff. Thereupon, His Majesty issued the corresponding order to Holtzendorff.

In a conference which was held between myself, Falkenhayn and Holtzendorff on the afternoon of the 3d, no progress was made with regard to the matter. Each of us maintained his own standpoint. At the same time, Holtzendorff recognized unqualifiedly that the announcement of his U-boat war would unquestionably bring about war with the United States, and that we must avoid this break.

Yesterday, on the 4th, His Majesty took the question up with Falkenhayn on the occasion of the usual conference. Lyncker, who was present, told Treutler that he was not in a position to learn the result.

Thereupon, His Majesty set another general conference for yesterday afternoon, at which Lyncker, Müller and Plessen were present. Obviously under the influence of his talk with Falkenhayn, His Majesty opened the conference with the following *résumé*:

Falkenhayn agreed with me in the view that, on account of our gradually declining powers of resistance, but particularly on account of those of our allies, the war must come to an end by the winter of 1916-17; that the successes which were to be hoped for in the various theaters of war on land would not suffice to bring this result about; that England must be struck a vital blow; that, in the capacity of Commander in Chief, he could not allow President Wilson to dictate to him to what use he was to put our submarines; that he would be obliged to conduct an unrestricted U-boat war in order to bring about a victorious termination to the battle for Germany's existence; that the date for commencing this war, he would set at about the beginning of April; that up to this time it was for diplomacy to keep the horizon clear, that is, to keep the American people well informed with regard to our rights and the necessity of the U-boat war; that corresponding measures must be adopted at once with regard to the neutral Powers of Europe; that after Falkenhayn and I, the former by oral representation, I by means of a memorial, had submitted our views to him, he would

request Admiral Holtzendorff to inform him as to the U-boat forces that could be used in carrying on the war against England.

Holtzendorff did this, giving also the number of available U-boats, in the course of which, nevertheless, the number of those which were at the present time ready to go to the front and those nearing completion were more or less confused. Nor was any clear picture of the situation obtained by the questions which His Majesty interposed. I did not get the impression that His Majesty was better informed on the subject of our U-boat strength after the conference than he had been beforehand, at least not as to details, and, if at all, to a quite superficial extent. Holtzendorff stated with great positiveness that, in the course of from six to eight months, England would be forced to sue for peace as the result of the unrestricted U-boat war; that as a matter of fact he had overstated the period in question, and that, according to his personal conviction, all would be up with England before that time. This view was sustained by no other than the well-known and general arguments.

Thereupon, I corrected the impression that I was convinced that the powers of resistance of Austria and our own as well would become exhausted in any event in the winter of 1916-17; that it was probably true that, if driven to the wall, we would last still longer, a view to which Falkenhayn indicated his agreement by nodding affirmatively. For the rest, I contented myself with a quite brief representation of my general views on the subject, referring occasionally to the memorial in order, in His Majesty's interests, to prevent the situation from reaching a critical stage.

Then Falkenhayn spoke briefly and openly, to the effect that my reasoning would stand or fall with the premise that England would desist before allowing herself to be put in a position where it was impossible for her to carry on the war; that he knew England and the British well enough to know that that would never be the case; that the U-boat war was the only means by which such injuries could be inflicted upon England as to make her ready for peace. (It was obvious that in the further course of his reasoning he consciously avoided the idea of forcing England to her knees.) That, for this reason, unless we desired to be ruined, we could not do without the U-boat war; that all further delay in initiating it would mean irreparable damage; that America was our enemy already.

Thereupon, I presented my views at considerable length and declared that I was ready to clear up the situation for the United States and for the neutral States as well, but I laid particular emphasis on the point that, so far as could be predicted, we would in four weeks still find ourselves in the same position which we occupied today, to wit, in contemplation of the question as to whether or not we were willing to start the U-boat war at the cost of a break with the United States; and I repeatedly stated that in that case I would not be willing to assume the responsibility.

No further opposition was made to my views, and His Majesty deferred reaching a definite conclusion.

Holtzendorff has the impression that the U-boat war is definitely scheduled to start in the first part of April. If we judge by form alone, he may be justified in his view. But there is no material reason for it, for, in spite of the indecisive attitude taken by His Majesty, the real result of the conference was that His Majesty does not desire to bring about a break with the United States as a result of the U-boat war, no, not even by the beginning of April. His Majesty made this situation clear to Valentini and Treutler that evening, and assured me of the same thing on the 5th. On this date, after church, His Majesty visited me in my garden to express his thanks and his approval in the warmest and most unreserved terms. He stated without qualification that our U-boat forces were insufficient to overcome England; that as a matter of fact England could not be overcome; that if we were to challenge England to come out and fight us on the seas, in the face of a break with the United States, every Englishman would give up his last shirt before he would capitulate; that he was still banking on the commercial instinct of the British to finally make it clear to them that they have nothing to gain by continuing the war.

Admiral v. Müller made it plain to Mr. v. Holtzendorff, at my request, that the impressions which he had received were erroneous.

That we could accomplish any more with America at the present time than we accomplished by our last note, I doubt. Holtzendorff suggested that it be published here as soon as it was published in the United States. We could scarcely avoid this, although it would revive the clamor for a U-boat war. We shall probably discuss this matter further.

Falkenhayn has arranged for a general censorship for U-boat articles. Under this arrangement, the U-boat war is to be subjected to the same treatment in the press as are the operations of our armies.

Tirpitz has received a sharp Cabinet note, whereby the supervision of the press regarding matters affecting the conduct of the war on sea is transferred to the Admiralty Staff. The navy leaders expect that the answer thereto will be Tirpitz's resignation, which would be accepted. I believe the last assumption is right, and doubt the correctness of the first. Löhlein's communication in the Bundesrat will provide the necessary springboard.

Kindly excuse the haste with which this letter is written, as well as my poor penmanship. My nerves are somewhat uneasy.

With best wishes,

Most sincerely yours,

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Memorial of Ambassador Count Bernstorff to Secretary of State Lansing

WASHINGTON, March 8, 1916.

The Imperial Government lays stress upon the necessity of again setting out with all frankness the details of the situation as it has developed up to this time, in consonance with the friendly relations between the two great nations and the sincere desire of the Imperial Government to avoid any clouding of these relations.

At the beginning of the war and at the suggestion of the United States of America, the German Government immediately announced itself ready to ratify the Declaration of London. German prize law had already been promulgated on the basis of the agreements reached in the Declaration of London, and without any limitation whatsoever. This constituted a recognition of the fact that existing principles of international law which guaranteed the freedom of the sea to neutrals, and also to belligerents, for the lawful purposes of commerce, were, on the German side, accorded every sanction. England, on the contrary, has refused to ratify the Declaration of London, and from the outbreak of the war began to impose limitations upon the lawful commerce carried on by neutral States, for the purpose of injuring Germany's interests in this way. The systematic imposition of restrictions in regard to the agreements on contraband of the 5th of August, the 20th of August, the 21st of September and the 29th of October, were followed on the 3d of November, 1914, by the proclamation by the British Admiralty that the whole North Sea was to be looked upon as a war area in which commercial shipping of every kind would be exposed to the greatest dangers from mines and war craft. The protest of the neutral States met with no success. From this date on, there was practically no further opportunity for neutral commerce with Germany. In February, 1915, Germany found herself forced to adopt counter-measures for the purpose of meeting those steps which had been taken by her adversaries in violation of international law. For the purpose of putting these counter-measures into effect, Germany selected new instrumentalities of warfare, the application of which had not been made the subject of regulations in international law, and, thereby, broke no existing law, but merely took advantage of the peculiar characteristics of the new weapon, the U-boat. The use of the new weapon was bound to limit the freedom of movement of the neutral Powers and constituted a danger, the results of which could be avoided by the publication of a special warning corresponding to the warning already issued by the British with regard to the dangers of the war areas of the North Sea.

Since both belligerents had made the claim that their policy was merely in retaliation for the violations of law on the part of their opponents (in the

German note of the 17th of February, 1915, and in the English note of the 18th and 20th of February, 1915), the Government of the United States of America approached them both for the purpose of bringing about full compliance with international law as it had been recognized as such before the war. On the one side, it requested Germany to make use of its new weapon in accordance with the principles applicable to former instrumentalities of sea warfare and, on the other hand, requested England to allow foodstuffs for the non-belligerent population of Germany to be transported for distribution under American control.

On the 1st of March, 1915, Germany announced its willingness to meet the request, whereas England, on the 15th of March, refused to reach an understanding based on the American proposal. As a matter of fact, England, by its order of the 11th of March, 1915, ignored what was left of that freedom of action to which neutral commerce with Germany and with her neutral neighbors were entitled under international law, the purpose being to defeat Germany by starvation. In spite of this, during the further course of the war, and after the nationals of neutrals had lost their lives on various occasions against the will and intention of Germany, Germany limited the practical use of its U-boat weapon to methods corresponding to the wishes of the Government of the United States, and went to such lengths in so doing that the rights of neutrals to engage in lawful commerce remained practically untouched as far as Germany was concerned.

But England went further and made it impossible for the U-boats to exercise those rights which, according to the principles of international law, may be exercised in a war on commerce, in that it armed nearly all of its merchant ships, and ordered that the armament should be used for purposes of attack. Photographs of the English orders were submitted to the neutral governments with the memorial of the 8th of February, 1916. These orders are in direct conflict with the announcement of the British Ambassador in Washington of August 25, 1914. The Imperial German Government had hoped that these proofs would put the neutral governments in the position of bringing about the disarmament of merchant ships, on the grounds set out in the proposals for disarmament made by the United States of America on January 23, 1916. But, as a matter of fact, the arming of these vessels with ordnance was prosecuted by our opponents with greater energy than ever.

The fundamental principle announced by the American Government, that it would not forbid its citizens to take ship on enemy merchant craft, was used by England and its allies for the purpose of arming merchant ships for purposes of attack. So it results that merchant ships can easily destroy the U-boats and, in case they are unsuccessful in the offensive measures

which they undertake, believe that they are placed in a position of security by the presence of American citizens on board.

The order to make use of arms was supplemented by instructions to the captains of merchant ships to fly false flags and to ram the U-boats; information received with regard to bonuses paid out and the distribution of decorations to successful merchant captains show how these orders are being carried out. The Allies have acceded to this policy on the part of the British.

The situation confronting Germany is this:

(a) That a blockade has, in violation of international law, been keeping neutral commerce away from German ports and making exports on the part of Germany impossible (see American note to England of November 5, 1915).

(b) That restrictive amendments to the agreements as to contraband have, in violation of international law (see American note to England of November 5, 1915), for the past year and a half, interfered with Germany's maritime commerce with neutral neighboring Powers.

(c) That interference with the mail, in violation of international law (see American memorandum to England of the 10th of January, 1916), is being carried on to prohibit Germany from keeping in touch with foreign countries.

(d) That a system of ever-increasing arbitrary acts of violence against neutrals, on the principle of "might makes right," has interfered with the carrying on of commerce between Germany and neutrals across land boundaries, in order to complete the hunger blockade of the non-belligerent population of the Central Powers.

(e) That Germans with whom our enemies are coming into contact by sea are being robbed of their liberty, irrespective of whether they are belligerents or non-belligerents.

(f) That our opponents have had their merchant ships armed for purposes of offense and have thereby made it impossible to use U-boats in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Declaration of London (see German memorial of February 8, 1916).

The British White Book of the 5th of January, 1916, remarks, in boastful language, apropos of the stoppage of German trade, that it is by these measures that Germany's export trade has been practically stopped all together, and that its import trade has been rendered dependent upon the will of England.

The Imperial Government ventures to hope that, in accordance with the friendly relations which have existed during the past centuries between the two peoples, the views here expressed will be given due consideration by the people of the United States in spite of the obstacles to an understanding between the two nations which have been placed in the way by our enemies.

Communication of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to the representatives of the Press

BERLIN, March 13, 1916.

In the first place the Imperial Chancellor proceeded to describe the inspiring impressions of the front which he had brought back from his visit to Headquarters. Everybody, he said, who came back from the front was full of praise for the aggressive spirit which characterized our troops. It was as it had been in the beginning of the war. Great successes had already been obtained before Verdun and greater were to be expected. Battles had been prepared for in advance with a thoroughness which had never existed before. Therefore, the losses of the French had been very heavy and ours bearable. That the French had lost between ninety thousand and one hundred thousand men in the Verdun battles, while our losses had not even approached half of this number. Likewise, the number of dead on our side had been relatively less than it had been in earlier engagements; that a large number of casualties consisted of slightly wounded men; that a happy, inspired and self-reliant morale was the order of the day.

Here in Berlin this was not so. Here one found a kind of wrought-up nervousness and a soggy morale. There was absolutely no occasion for this. That during these days he had stood with the Emperor on a particular spot where they had happened to be together exactly one year before; that the Emperor had reminded him of this, and had said: "How it looked then. The Austrians all gone to pieces in Serbia, the Russians in Hungary, the offensive in the west—it certainly was a very serious situation. We can thank God that our situation is different now." That the Emperor by no means lost sight of the seriousness of the war; that he forms a careful estimate of existing conditions and of our situation, taken as a whole; he knows the spirit of the troops and realizes what we have accomplished; but he has, too, a serious sense of responsibility for the future.

Our people, who have accomplished so much, have a right to insist that the men responsible for their leadership do not allow themselves to be led astray by immature political and military policies. This might result in throwing away all the advantages we have obtained, but these responsible men must be in a position to demand that they be not urged to undertake lines of action as the result of varying moods or of rumors—lines of action for which they can not be responsible either to God or to history.

Attempts have been made to force these responsible men to make a use of the U-boats which goes beyond the limits of action prescribed by the memorial. The U-boat is an effective weapon. The hope of conquering England by means of this weapon is just as enticing a hope to me as it is to any other German. There has been talk about regard for other peoples'

feelings, a lack of courage, unnecessary sparing of our enemies. These are representations which are just as stupid as they are injurious. No weapon is cast aside in the corner out of sentimental grounds. This would be a piece of cruelty directed against our own people. What is needed here is cool and sober deliberation. First, weigh the risk; then make the decision; and we are left with a straight road before us. It is possible that in the discussion of the U-boat war a remarkable confusion of terms has existed. The U-boat war of the memorial has been confused with the unrestricted U-boat war which is to be carried on without regard for passengers or flag, against every ship that plies its way toward England. The memorial war, started on the day set, can already point to successes attained and will have further successes. The intention has never existed to recede from the announcements of the memorial. Various statements to this effect have been made. Why people have been skeptical on this point, I can not say. The situation is somewhat different with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war. In this connection, the idea is to sink every ship which approaches the English coast. It is immaterial whether it is a neutral ship or enemy ship, whether it is a freighter or a liner.

If this unrestricted U-boat war is announced, we shall be at war with America tomorrow. There is not the slightest doubt of this. So far as Denmark and Holland are concerned, it is possible that they would not resort to actual war, but it is known that the sympathy for us in those countries is not very strong, and that the remnants thereof would be swept away. We can not consider the favorable results of a war of this kind except in connection with the significance of a war with the United States.

The public has made many and different guesses concerning the number of U-boats. People have talked of 200, 140, 100, or 80. Of course we can not give out in detail information concerning the real number. But I can say that these numbers which the public assumes to exist are not only wrong, but chimerical.

Nor does the Navy believe that as the result England would be fully cut off from the outside world. Only one third of the boats which are ready for use can be constantly in action. Such boats as exist can not be all distributed around England, but must be distributed in the Baltic, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea as well. Naturally the efficiency of the weapon would increase with increasing numbers, and in any case we are in the position of inflicting tremendous losses on the English. But the boats can not go into action during the night. Nor can the South Atlantic ports of France be blockaded. If bread is distributed on a ration basis in England, from 16,000 to 20,000 tons daily meet the requirements. Four or five steamers would be sufficient for the transportation of this amount. Unfortunately a complete blockade is impossible; were it otherwise, I should be the first to advocate it.

The crucial question is this: How much loss in tonnage will be required to force England to capitulate? If we were to sink 4 million tons in six months, it would be incorrect to say that the total had been diminished by this sum. Just think of the requisition of the German ships or of the English vessels now building. For the purpose of replacing tonnage losses, England can use a certain amount of her military vessels for the purposes of commerce. The total tonnage is 18 million. Who believes that, being left with 14 million, England would be unable to prosecute the war? If we were to undertake this U-boat war, a plea for peace on the part of England would constitute an open avowal that her supremacy at sea had been destroyed. Before they do this, the English will sacrifice their last shirt.

And at the same time, we must always bear in mind that America would enter the war. As long as America remains an onlooker, it is always possible that a majority of the English will finally grasp the idea that war is a bad business. For us, a war with the United States is not a negligible quantity. The break with the United States would have a notable moral effect. It would increase the moral strength of the Entente. The hopes entertained by the French that the *guerre d'usure* would be successful, would become for them a certainty. Points of disagreement between the Allies would vanish in a moment. The arbitrary measures against neutrals would no longer be limited. The pressure on Holland and Denmark, the effect of which would be increased by the impression created by our torpedoing of Danish and Dutch steamers, would reach such a pitch that they would either allow themselves to be treated the way Greece has been treated, or would go over to the side of our enemies. In Roumania, the pro-Ally feeling would reach its height. At the same time we are not to forget that we too are members of a coalition, and that the powers of resistance of our allies would not be heightened.

Now come the practical considerations. America would turn over all of her resources for the purposes of the war. The measures of her financial assistance would be increased. The armies of our enemies would be increased by recruiting adventurous Americans—those armies whose numerical superiority gives us enough to do even now—our importations from neutral countries would stop. At the present time we are drawing products worth 100 million from Holland every month. Every day, the Army consumes 5 million of foreign imports.

Are we to draw down upon our own heads the fate that will attend such a course? The work of the Relief Commission in Belgium, too, would be given up. It would not help us any if the Belgians behind the front were to become frantic from hunger and want, particularly in case of complications with Holland.

Arguments *pro* and *con* have been carefully weighed. The insufficient number of the U-boats, the uncertainty and remoteness of success, the im-

possibility of bringing England to her knees by this course, the certainty of a break with America—all these elements had to be taken into consideration.

The arguments *pro* and *con* can not be discussed publicly. It is therefore much to be regretted that false representations have been made to the public, based on false premises. Untold injury has resulted to the Fatherland by virtue of this. I hope that you, recognizing your tremendous responsibility, will be ready to guide public opinion back again into calm channels. The public must abstain from attempting to urge upon those responsible for the conduct of the war conclusions for which they can not be responsible. I have spoken as frankly as I possibly can.

Thereupon, the Chancellor discussed briefly the question of war aims. He recalled the fact that the most ambitious war aims were proposed just at a time when our situation was certainly not a brilliant one, from August, 1914, up to March, 1915. He had been derided because he did not adopt these aims for his own. They had been submitted to him just at that time when Hindenburg had been obliged to withdraw from Ivangorod before his brilliant turning movement to the north. At that time, orders had been given that, covering a region far to the west of the Vistula, the grain should be threshed because we wanted to bring it to a place of safety in case the situation should become more serious. It was at that time that these far-reaching plans of annexation made their appearance. The Chancellor considered it bad policy to bluff around with far-reaching annexation schemes, and then have to tone down little by little. The adoption of this policy had been of very little service to France. The opposite method was preferable. Nor was it possible at this time to announce publicly what the war aims were. If we desired to make Poland a subject of discussion, it was very probable that differences of opinion would develop between us and our Austro-Hungarian allies. Nor was the opportunity any better for discussing other war aims. For the rest, his speeches voiced a complete and far-reaching program: the elimination of natural channels of invasion; the improvement of the strategic frontiers; free economic development; Germany to act as the nucleus of the weaker States in the solving of the European problem. A great aim which would give positive significance to the defensive character of the war. We have not yet reached the stage where we can see the termination of the war. In a war of coalition, unexpected variations in situation occur. Thus, it is not a good plan to definitely determine upon details. But there is a definite aim which we have in contemplation. If this point is reached, the war will not have been fought in vain. All the information which reaches us must urge us on to maintain our determination to carry on the war without nervousness and without even appearing to long for peace. This determination is not to be manifested by the announcement of despotic measures, but in the justifiable consciousness of might and power. It is only by the maintenance of such

an attitude that we show ourselves to be worthy of the sacrifice of our sons and brothers on the field of battle. If we begin to fight amongst ourselves, that is but a poor way of showing our thanks to them. Our watchword should be "for our country," not "for self." Let us drop all differences, let us all reach out a friendly hand, and in this spirit make use of the tremendous influence which you have.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

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Minister v. Treutler to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. Berlin, March 15, 1916.

Telegram No. 177.

For the Imperial Chancellor.

Strictly confidential.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,

March 15, 1916.

Today's conference on the war, held by His Majesty, took place in connection with the Müller-Capelle conference. His Majesty informed General v. Falkenhayn of the carrying out of the change, and the latter availed himself of the opportunity to ask His Majesty to be good enough to push the new Secretary of State on the subject of the carrying out of the U-boat war as rapidly as this could be accomplished. His Majesty replied that Admiral Capelle had announced that such an undertaking was out of the question before the end of the summer. What an abyss lies behind us.

TREUTLER.

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Dr. Kaempf, President of the Reichstag, to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. Berlin, April 14, 1916.

BERLIN, April 6, 1916.

I have the honor to respectfully inform your Excellency that the Reichstag, in its full session of today and acting on the report of the imperial budget committee, sends the following announcement to the Imperial Chancellor:

In view of the fact that the submarine has shown itself to be a capable weapon against the English conduct of war the purpose of which is the starvation of Germany, the Reichstag announces its conviction that it is essential, as it is in the case of all our military resources, to make such use of the undersea boat as will guarantee the winning of a peace which will secure Germany's future, and, through negotiations with foreign States, to

make possible the freedom of action in the use of this weapon necessary to retain intact Germany's position as a sea Power and at the same time to observe the just interests of neutral States.

DR. KAEMPF,
President of the Reichstag.

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*Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to the Chief of the General Staff,
General v. Falkenhayn*

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,
May 3, 1916.

Regarding your esteemed favor of the thirtieth instant, I can simply again announce to your Excellency that, in my judgment of the political and economic situation in England I can not adopt the view that, by making use of those U-boats in a war of commerce which are available to us at this time, we shall be able to bring about England's defeat within a determinable period.

I do not apprehend a prolongation of the war as the result of the limitations in the conduct of the U-boat war. I am very much rather inclined to the opinion that, in view of America's participation in the war, which would certainly have to be expected in case we insisted upon the conduct of the U-boat war in the forms hitherto suggested, a prolongation of the war for an indeterminate period would result thereby.

I can therefore not admit that from the limitation of the U-boat war reasons can be deduced to justify the adoption of the methods indicated by your Excellency for the conduct of our military operations on land.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

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*Chief of the General Staff, General v. Falkenhayn, to Imperial Chancellor v.
Bethmann-Hollweg*

Rec. Berlin, May 6, 1916.
To be delivered personally.
Re communication of May 3, 1916.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,
May 4, 1916.

In opposition to your Excellency's view, I consider the unrestricted U-boat warfare not only one, but *the only* effective instrument of war at our disposal capable of bringing England to the point of willingness to

consider peace conditions of such a nature as would be acceptable to Germany. In this connection, I am in the fullest accord with the views which have repeatedly been submitted to me in the most binding form by the Chief of the Admiralty Staff. If this instrument of warfare is not put into operation or is not used in time, there is no secret as to what the results will be.

So far as this situation is concerned, America's step from the secret war in which it has long been engaged against us, to an openly declared hostility can effect no real change. The only question which presents itself is whether more disadvantages can result through America's taking this step than through our failure to make use of this instrument of war, the assumption being, of course, that that step is not to be avoided if we continue the use of the instrument in question. Neither can I agree with your Excellency's opinion on this phase of the question, and for this reason it is impossible for me to draw the conclusions reached by you.

V. FALKENHAYN.

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Principal points of the Conferences with the Imperial Chancellor, Field Marshal v. Hindenburg, and General Ludendorff, on August 29 and 30, 1916, in connection with my remarks of the twenty-seventh instant, concerning the "Memorial regarding the cargo space question"

OFFICIAL COMMENT

Rec. Berlin, August 31, 1916.

The general war situation, including successes as well as the demands made upon her as the result of two years of war, find Germany engaged in a difficult defensive conflict in which she is continually opposed by old and new enemies who are constantly increasing their preponderance of manpower, artillery and aircraft, and there appears to be no prospect of changing this general situation by a powerful offensive. So far as our opponents are concerned, the continuation of the war depends mainly upon the attitude of England, which, upheld by its supremacy of the sea and by the unneutral attitude of the United States, is in a position to continue to conduct war against us until, little by little, the lack of all foodstuffs and raw material will be the means of our exhaustion.

To prevent England from reaching this point by the use of all means at our command, is a question of the life or ruin of the German Empire and the German people. The only means of doing this consists in destroying the possibility of intercourse by sea to and from England by the use of the U-boat weapon to the full extent of its capacity. The probable results of conducting such a war are made plain in the memorial.

The objections against this mode of warfare are not considered mainly from the standpoint of the effect upon England, but from that of the reaction upon the United States. The expected break with us will undoubtedly place Holland and Denmark in the power of the Anglo-Saxon race and will at least force these States to close their boundaries to us, and, in all probability, will result in their submitting to the landing of British troops on their soil or to their definitely joining themselves to the Entente. The South American States as well will take sides with the United States, politically and from the economic standpoint, with the result that, among other things, the entire cargo space of the world will be placed at the disposal of our enemies.

If we concede to these objections their fullest force, then Germany's fate depends upon the advent and working out of possibilities which may certainly lie in the hand of God, but assuredly do not lie in our own. Russia's "inability to enter upon a third winter campaign" and "the change of sentiment in the United States against England," are factors in those possibilities which are to be awaited in the coming months. On the other hand, the entrance of the United States, and its probable following into the camp of our enemies at the present time would certainly mean the *finis Germaniae*.

In opposition to this view, the following facts are considered conclusive by the Admiralty Staff: From the military and economic standpoint, time is working against us from hour to hour. England's blockade measures are bringing about with ever-increasing rapidity the elimination of what remains of our trade relations with the neutral Powers; England is attaining her object in the absence of any opposition of ours. The influence of the neutral Powers upon our conduct of the war becomes more and more significant with the passage of each day which marks an increasing exhaustion on our part, and respect for us is dwindling. As long as we remain economically independent as the result of a good harvest, and are at the present time able from a military standpoint to defend ourselves with brilliant results, and above all as long as we are able to hold in check neutrals whose territory is contiguous to ours, both by means of imports for which a high price is paid, as well as, on the other hand, by controlling the coal supply and other exports of value, the danger that America can force these neutrals to enter into hostilities against us can not be called threatening. The little neighboring States will not make up their minds to make war upon us as the result of their own interests or inclinations.

Holland would take up arms against the first Power to attack her. Denmark, with Copenhagen, lies completely within the sphere of activities of our fleet and our airships.

The United States can scarcely engage in more hostile activities than she has already done up to this time. England will not gain one single ton of

cargo space as the result of the United States entering the war; all the South American States are already suffering an actual shortage in their own cargo space. The cargo space of our interned vessels is negligible.

Is the general war situation such as to *permit us in any case* to refrain from the use of any effective weapon in this deadly-earnest battle for existence out of anxiety to avoid still greater dangers? And would we be justified in taking no steps, even for a few weeks, to bring about a favorable result by increasing the difficulties of England's sea trade and economic situation, instead of concentrating all our strength to increase the dangers of the situation for the Islanders? Before us are months of the most effective U-boat war; as far as it is humanly possible to determine, it is within our power to break the British desire to maintain the war, before the year comes to an end. To put off beginning until later would, to be sure, not put the waging of the U-boat war during the winter months out of the question, but would mean that we would have materially less success and would suffer materially greater losses.

Can Austria and Turkey last through a winter campaign? Will Bulgaria hold on if we ourselves do not plunge in with all available resources at our command, certain of victory?

The public spirit of our own people is in desperate need of moral support and inspiration. In the absence of any prospect of victory or of the termination of the war, daily privations will bring about a general weakening or will incite to opposition. The appointment of Field Marshal v. Hindenburg to the position of Chief of the General Staff is a stimulant without a parallel and will be of material assistance in carrying out our fifth war loan, and this step, taken for the purpose of putting the nation on its feet, will find its climax in the U-boat war.

To my mind, the *finis Germaniae* will not result from the application, but from the renunciation of the weapon which will cripple England's ability to dominate her allies as well as her own conduct of the war.

V. HOLTZENDORFF.

Conference with regard to the adoption of the unrestricted U-boat war

Rec. Berlin, August 31, 1916.

Present:

1. Dr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, Imperial Chancellor.
2. General Field Marshal v. Beneckendorff and v. Hindenburg, Chief of the General Staff.
3. Dr. Helfferich, Secretary of State of the Interior.

4. v. Jagow, Secretary of State of the Foreign Office.
5. Lieutenant General Wild v. Hohenborn, Minister of War.
6. Admiral v. Capelle, Secretary of State of the Imperial Navy Department.
7. Admiral v. Holtzendorff, Chief of the Admiralty Staff of the Navy.
8. Lieutenant General Ludendorff, First Quartermaster General.
9. Admiral Koch.

Recorder of the Proceedings: Counselor of Legation Baron v. Grüнау.

PLESS CASTLE, *August 31, 1916.*

Admiral v. HOLTZENDORFF, after reading an official comment concerning the present determination of the U-boat question, said: According to the general military situation, we are placed in a situation of defense; the continuation of the war on the part of our opponents is completely dependent upon England's attitude; it is therefore necessary for us to prevent England, by the use of all means in our power, from continuing to carry on the war, and the destruction of England's ocean commerce will accomplish this purpose; the last memorial of the Admiralty Staff sets out plainly what the result of this destruction would be.

The reaction of the United States and the remaining neutral Powers is used as an argument against carrying on the unrestricted U-boat warfare; that in such case the entire shipping space of the world would be made available to England; that Russia's incapacity to carry out a third winter campaign and its necessity for peace are also arguments against the taking up of the U-boat war at an early date.

In the meanwhile, time is working against us; the blockade of Germany is becoming more and more oppressive; as the result of a good harvest we will be less dependent upon imports, and, speaking from the military standpoint, we can maintain an effective defensive.

So far as the neutrals are concerned, Holland will attack the first one to put foot upon her territory; the entrance of Denmark into the war is very improbable; England will not be able to gain in freight space; no freight space will be placed at its disposal by any action of the United States; nor is this likely to be the case with regard to the South American States, since they themselves are suffering from a shortage of tonnage; the tonnage of those of our ships which are in the possession of the enemy is negligible; it is within our power to break England's determination to carry on the war to the end of the year; to put off commencing the U-boat war would put off the results in question; in this connection the question must be well considered as to whether our allies will be able to hold out any longer; if we renounce the use of the U-boat weapon we may have reason to believe that this means *finis Germaniae*.

Secretary of State v. JAGOW: Unrestricted U-boat war would in any event mean the breaking of diplomatic relations with the United States, and, if American lives are lost, would finally lead to war; if the last neutral world

Power were to take the side of the Entente, the smaller neutral States would be left with no choice other than to work with us or against us. (Here follow comments about the European neutral Powers.) If we take up unrestricted U-boat warfare, the attitude of all neutral Powers will be changed against us and we shall have to calculate upon establishing new fronts. Germany will in such case be looked upon as a mad dog against whom the hand of every man will be raised for the purpose of finally bringing about peace.

Even assuming that England would become exhausted as the result of the U-boat war, the question still remains whether she will conclude peace on that account. We have seen that France, which has long since been bled white, is upheld by her hope based on the other Allies. In this way, England, too, will exert the most desperate efforts and will keep herself on her feet by the hope which she will entertain concerning the remaining Allies. Whether under these conditions the newly-joined Allies will make peace is very questionable.

Secretary of State HELFFERICH: It is to be admitted that the situation both here and in England for launching a U-boat war is more favorable now than it was a year ago or in the spring, because at that time the mere blockade on the part of the neutrals would have been sufficient to starve us. Our harvest is notably better than it was last year, but at the same time we shall be pinched, and every importation would be welcome by us. Last year England had a good crop, and those territories which were the source of the supply and to which it had recourse had record crops. This year the English and Canadian crops both are bad, and the American crop fell off 30 per cent. England is all the more dependent on importations from South America, India and Australia. For this reason, the shortage of cargo space is a very vital thing.

At the same time, we must always remember that the British supplies in the way of breadstuffs and the product of the new crop assure a capacity for maintenance for the period of from four to five months without any further importations. Moreover, we can not bank upon an immediate stoppage of the British ocean commerce, since only 5 per cent of the arriving ships are destroyed monthly. At this stage England still has freight space of $12\frac{1}{2}$ million tons, compared with that of 20 million tons in time of peace. With the latter tonnage, it took care of half the commerce of the world. With our 5 million tonnage, we met our own needs, and, in addition thereto, a part of the commerce of the world. If in the period of from four to six months, 4 million of the tonnage of the British merchant fleet are destroyed, England will still have at her disposal 8 million tons, which will make it readily possible for her to meet her own needs. Therefore, such a result of the U-boat war would hardly be sufficient to force her to capitulation. It is true that commercial activities will be rendered most difficult and

that the price of foodstuffs will rise. But we ourselves have had occasion to see to what extent the endurance of a people will hold out, and that even meager provisions go very far under competent management. The assumption is erroneous that the British organization and the determination to hold out would fail in England. The statement is not justified that the U-boat war would have the effect of depriving the English population of enough to eat. During the four or five months to cover which provisions already exist, still further provisions would come in. If the U-boat war should result in the British seamen being unwilling to go to sea on their own account, then maritime commerce could be organized on a military basis. It is on account of all these considerations that I am not persuaded that England can be actually downed.

The reactions of the U-boat war from the political and economic standpoint must not be underestimated. Everybody is perfectly convinced that a break with the United States and a war with the United States would be unavoidable. The assumption that the hostile attitude of the United States can not reach a higher pitch so far as we are concerned, is erroneous. Up to the present time, the Allies have received from the United States in the way of loans \$1,250,000,000. In the case of war, America will stand ready with all of its reserves available for the cause of the Allies, which will then become the cause of the United States. America will desire to win the war as quickly as possible and will summon all its energies for putting this wish into execution. Acting in cooperation with England, the very strongest kind of pressure can be exerted upon the neutral Powers to join the Entente. Since Denmark and Holland are dependent upon imports by water, they will be utterly unable to oppose it. We have no means of exerting pressure to avoid this result. Our need for iron is now so urgent that we are already at the point at which we can release no more. Holland can obtain from England, with limitations, whatever she needs in the way of coal. I see nothing but catastrophe following the application of the U-boat weapon at this time. A method which will lead us out of one serious situation only into the toils of another more serious, is not practical if we are not able to adopt counter-measures for the purpose of rendering the otherwise disadvantageous result ineffectual.

Admiral v. CAPELLE: According to the course which the war has followed up to this time, I am convinced that we are not on the road to a peace acceptable to us if we continue along the lines pursued thus far. The conviction has now forced itself upon the Navy that nothing will lead to peace but the launching of an unrestricted U-boat war. If complete success were not to result from the U-boat war, this would not, in my opinion, lead to a catastrophe, but would, at the very worst, merely result in prolonging the war of exhaustion, just as the situation is at this time. The determination of our opponents to carry on the war is no longer susceptible to strength-

ening. The U-boat war will weaken this determination to an extraordinary extent, particularly in the case of England. Whether this will actually take place within the time limit set, and whether in this way peace will be directly brought about, is a question on which opinions may differ, but in any event the war spirit of our opponents will be notably lowered.

If we admit the necessity of carrying on a U-boat war, the present moment is the best for launching it. Shortage of foodstuffs is very great in England at the present time. It is not denied that the crops of our opponents and of the neutral Powers are bad, whereas our crops are good. Whether this will be the case next year is a question. By the coming spring, we shall have made a very decided advance towards exhaustion, of both our manpower and material; at that time, too, the danger on the part of the neutrals will be greater than it is today. Then, too, the desire for victory on the part of our opponents will have increased and their inclination for peace will have decreased. The capacity of our allies to hold out to any further material extent is more than doubtful. Our chances of success will constantly be on the decline the longer we wait. I do not believe that it will be possible for us to conclude an unfavorable ¹ peace, without having had recourse to the U-boat weapon.

Admiral v. HOLTZENDORFF contradicts the statements of Secretary of State Helfferich with regard to the comparison of British and German tonnage, and expresses the opinion that if the neutral Powers should cut us off from their supply, it could be guaranteed that they would not dispose of their products to England.

Secretary of State HELFFERICH replies that his reference to the English and German tonnage was made only for the purpose of pointing out that nothing can be proved by the relative amounts of the English losses. In our case too, by far the greatest part of imports come by sea. Nobody can prove that England, with 8 million tons of freight space, would not be in the position of sufficiently providing herself with foodstuffs.

Admiral v. HOLTZENDORFF refers to the destructive effect which the U-boat war would have upon England, where even at the present time foodstuffs are provided in sufficient amounts only with the greatest difficulty.

Imperial Chancellor v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG notes a reservation with regard to the report of his views contained in the written comment which was read by Admiral v. Holtzendorff, and continues as follows: I take the stand that the decision of the U-boat question must depend very greatly on the estimate of the military situation made by the Supreme High Command. According to the view of Field Marshal v. Hindenburg, with whom I have had a preliminary conference, no decision, either *pro* or *con*, can be reached as long as the military situation resulting from the participation of Roumania is not clear. According to my personal opinion, the declaration of a U-boat

¹ *Sic*. Should probably be "favorable."—TRANSLATOR.

war would be looked upon as an act of desperation both by the hostile and neutral world, as well as by a great portion of our own people. It would be very inadvisable to label such an undertaking from the very outset as an act of desperation.

If we combine the results of the statements made yesterday and today, no one will doubt that we shall be able to rely upon the destruction of, roughly speaking, 4 million tons of British shipping within from four to six months. The Admiralty Staff is of the opinion that England will then be ready to conclude peace. This opinion is considered by other gentlemen, for instance, by Secretary of State Helfferich, as of doubtful correctness, and nobody can prove that the hoped-for success will really come about. I, too, believe that this is merely an assumption. It is certain that a complete blockade from and to England can not be carried out, because U-boats can undertake nothing in the night time. We can lay down no iron ring around England, and, moreover, our blockade can be broken by the accompaniment of transports by war-ships. I have understood Admiral v. Holtzendorff to say that intercourse to and from Holland and Denmark can be stopped. Will it be possible to do this if, at the same time, we are carrying on an intensive U-boat war against the English coast?

We must realize that the break with the United States will certainly follow the launching of the U-boat war. (Here follow comments concerning European neutral Powers.)

I believe that a decision with regard to the launching of the U-boat war without an understanding with our allies is out of the question. We must calculate, in this connection, on the contingency that Turkey will be alienated from us. A successful stroke against Enver would be followed by a separate peace on the part of Turkey which it may conclude at any day. Nor can we involve Austria-Hungary in a war with the remaining neutral Powers without asking her opinion in the matter. If the Roumanian war were to turn out unfavorably for us, the U-boat war would avail us nothing; if Austria-Hungary falls to pieces, I do not know whether we shall be able to put up any further opposition. For these reasons, a final decision seems to me to be possible only after a clearing up of the military situation.

Admiral v. HOLTZENDORFF: I am convinced—I can submit no proof in support thereof—that two weeks of unrestricted U-boat warfare would result in the neutrals keeping at a distance from England. All these formidable objections against the U-boat war would mean a great deal more if we still had any freedom of choice, but how shall we obtain an acceptable peace in any other way? To my knowledge, the Austro-Hungarian Army and Navy would greet the prospect of the U-boat war with enthusiasm. What the political branch in Austria thinks about it, I am not informed. If we were to be left to ourselves, we should certainly have to make use of

the U-boat war in earnest. (Here follow comments concerning the European neutral Powers.)

Secretary of State v. JAGOW points out that a representative of Dutch shipping circles had stated that the Hollanders would continue to sail their steamers and would not be kept from so doing by a money indemnification. Baron Burian desires the U-boat war to begin, the sooner the better, provided it would not bring about a break with the United States, which is to be avoided at all costs.

Imperial Chancellor v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: If I were of the conviction that the U-boat war would lead to a successful conclusion, I would agree to it at once. The only question before us today is to submit the different elements which argue for and against it.

Admiral v. CAPELLE: On the west coast of England, the U-boat war will be carried on by means of the large U-boats. Even in the spring, we were in a position to obtain the success which we had in mind, and today we have twice the number of big U-boats on the western coast that we had in the spring. The number of the middle-sized U-boats is just as large as that of the larger ones. Their field of action is the North Sea and the Danish and Dutch coasts, and their number is sufficient for the purposes not only of a U-boat war against the east coast of England, but for a war against Holland and Denmark as well. It therefore follows that it is possible to cut off both these countries from intercourse with England.

Secretary of State HELFFERICH: I admit without reservation that the present situation is materially more favorable than that which has existed up to the present time, so far as the commencement of the U-boat war is concerned. On account of the poor harvest in the United States, it will be still better in the spring. With or without a U-boat war, England will automatically drift into a situation which will continuously become harder to bear.

If America and Canada have practically nothing to export, we shall not need the U-boat war. If England is now stocked up with a maximum of provisions, it will only have a minimum next spring. The increased prices in England exceed those which prevailed during the critical situation created by the first U-boat war in the spring of 1915. The Admiralty Staff assumes that war weariness will within a short time get a foothold in England. I believe that a U-boat war will bring about the most tremendous concentration of all resourcefulness and effort which the most efficient organization can produce. For that reason, I can not make myself believe that peace will come as the result of the U-boat war. The enormous injuries which will be inflicted upon England must be freely admitted. At the same time, we must not make use of even the most effective weapon if this is to result in such an injurious reaction upon us within a moderately short time as will deprive us of the further use of that weapon.

It is practically the fixed opinion of everyone that Holland, Denmark and Switzerland have been put in the most difficult situations as the result of the U-boat war. Each State will make its own calculations, and before courting certain destruction it will decide against us. So far as Denmark is concerned, there is no doubt about it. Holland, too, would look upon the torpedoing of its ships as an attack. (Here follow comments concerning the European neutral Powers.)

Admiral v. HOLTZENDORFF: The picture which has been drawn by Secretary of State Helfferich is very logical, but the brush has been dipped in dark colors. The point is that we are at present in a critical plight, out of which we must find our way. We shall not need to threaten the neutral Powers, but we can request them to maintain the same attitude toward us which they have up to the present time maintained toward England. The attitude of the neutral Powers will also be dictated by their geographical situation; Roumania is next door to Russia and had therefore to go hand and hand with Russia; Holland and Denmark are our neighbors, and we should therefore devise a plan to bring them over to our side.

From the standpoint of naval tactics, our situation would not be better next spring. At that time we shall have more U-boats, but it is impossible to state what the situation with regard to man-power will be. Our oil situation also will be jeopardized.

General LUDENDORFF: We do not know what will happen in the case of Austria and Roumania. The Roumanians are advancing to the south of the Carpathians. The Roumanians are poor soldiers, the Austrians still worse. We have put every possible thing in motion that the poor railroad communications would permit. We can scarcely bring enough men to the requisite point at the present time to check the Roumanian advance. Such as can be spared from the east and the west, must be sent against the Roumanians to the last man.

If it is possible that Holland and Denmark may go against us, we have nothing wherewith to oppose them. No decision has been made as to new contingencies. If we are in a position to do so, the question will come up as to whether we will be able to deliver a blow against the Roumanians. If such a stroke is successful, I shall be obliged to advise that the U-boat war be carried on, but only in case I should then have sufficient forces at my command to meet all eventualities. The immediate question to be considered is, whether we are so firmly placed as to stand fast at every point.

Field Marshal v. HINDENBURG: We would shout with joy if we could begin the U-boat war immediately, but it is a very serious question. We should have to take into consideration the possibility of new declarations of war and of landings in Holland and Denmark. A number of divisions would become tied up there, which we are not now in a position to spare. Our allies are not to be trusted. The future is now darker than ever. We

shall have to let some time pass (8 to 14 days) until we can get an accurate view of the situation. It is impossible to render a decision at this time. I will inform you of the time when this can be done.

Minister of War WILD v. HOHENBORN: The bases for rendering a judgment on the question of the U-boat war have changed. The question of sustenance has grown better as far as we are concerned, and has become worse in England. On the other hand, the war situation at the present time is undoubtedly less favorable in outlook. Also, no provisions are now made for securing the frontiers against Holland and Denmark. For the time being we must wait until we have an opportunity to judge how the Roumanian war is going to develop, at least in its very general aspect. In the meantime, we shall find out what forces we shall have available. The change in the situation for the worse is not such as to induce me to say that the U-boat war should be carried on in its intensity at the present time; my attitude depends materially upon what we can accomplish in the way of gathering forces which we can put on the march.

Admiral v. HOLTZENDORFF: Since we can carry on the U-boat war in the winter too, the commencement of the U-boat war can be postponed for a short time in spite of the existing urgency. The only question is whether our patience and the assumptions of the constantly increasing burdens which England is preparing for us, will not induce the small States to assume a hostile attitude toward us.

Secretary of State HELFFERICH: In so far as it is in any way possible, we are adopting the same policy with regard to the neutrals as is adopted by England. (Here follow comments concerning the European neutrals.)

Minister of War WILD v. HOHENBORN: Personally, I do not consider an attack by neutrals at all probable. If Denmark and Holland were blockaded by England, their imports to Germany would increase.

Secretary of State v. JAGOW: The anxiety which was caused the neutral Powers by the earlier U-boat war was really enormous. We were only able to calm them because we guaranteed indemnification and apologized for what we had done. The people were in despair.

The British Government did not exert their pressure on the neutral States directly, but indirectly through certain associations. The great difference with regard to England lies in this, that we would destroy ships and human lives in order to exert pressure in this way, while, according to the British system, the neutral Powers are simply limited as to the free choice of their activities, but, aside from this, are making quite extraordinary profits.

Imperial Chancellor v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I am fully conscious of the seriousness of the responsibility. It is hard to say what someone else would do. If I were to say that I did not believe that the neutral Powers would attack us if the Supreme High Command had insufficient forces to oppose

the new opponents were they to attack us, I would be assuming a great responsibility. Whether the neutrals decide for us or against us, depends very materially upon the combined situation. (Here follow comments concerning European neutrals.)

Secretary of State HELFFERICH: We can not depend upon an increase of imports from Holland and Denmark to us if the route to and from England is obstructed. Both countries depend upon the importation of fodder, which is now very scarce. Their meat, butter, and cheese production would fall off immediately. The result would be the announcement of an embargo, in order at least to safeguard their own necessities, since the wheat and grain production in these countries is very restricted and in such case could no longer be supplemented.

Admiral v. HOLTZENDORFF, in response to a question of the Minister of War on the point: General v. Falkenhayn had twice requested that the Navy should attack the English troop ships going to France. On account of the danger of mistakes in identity, and out of regard for the rights of neutrals, nothing could be undertaken. If these considerations are shoved aside, we shall undoubtedly have great success.

Imperial Chancellor v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I had intended to issue a call to the Reichstag next week. The parties themselves have certain objections, but I shall not be able to do otherwise than to summon the leaders of the parties into conference. They will doubtless take up the question of the U-boat war. I shall tell them in reply, without revealing the details of the conference of today, that the question has been searchingly considered by all the competent authorities, but that, in view of the present war situation, we have decided that the decision must be put off until later, since Field Marshal v. Hindenburg has stated that he will have to await the developments of the Roumanian campaign before a definite policy can be adopted with regard to the question.

*Captain v. Bülow to the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral v. Holtzendorff*¹

PLESS (GENERAL HEADQUARTERS),
September 10, 1916.

Today, in accordance with the instructions of your Excellency, I delivered to General Ludendorff the Kalkmann memorial to read, emphasizing the use of discretion as to its source and remarking upon its value. At the same time, I referred in the most pointed manner to the outstanding feature

¹ From the records of the Admiralty Staff.

referred to in the letter to the Field Marshal, that is, the greater danger of an attack by the neutral Powers attendant upon a renunciation of the U-boat war.

Ludendorff regretted the fact that the question had come into the political arena, since he regarded it as a purely military matter. With regard to the danger of war being declared by neutral Powers, there was room for a difference of opinion, as the communication from the Admiralty Staff indicated. He, for his part, must be guided by the decision of the Premier; that his judgments were invariably based upon actual conditions and circumstances.

I: But the Chief of the Admiralty Staff is firmly convinced that the situation with regard to neutral Powers was actually just the reverse of that which the Chancellor estimated it to be.

LUDENDORFF: He meant the actual situation which bore upon our military strength. If the Chancellor told him that a danger existed, that Denmark might become one of our enemies, he could not afford to ignore this because a different assumption was entertained; moreover, he himself was of the opinion that for the present we did not have sufficient forces for this purpose. The fault, he said, was that of the Austrians; he had been obliged to send to the Austrian front two divisions which should have gone to Transylvania, and now it was impossible for him to carry out what he had had in mind. The west front was calling for reserves. He could only say "yes" to us, and would do so with pleasure, when he was assured that all our fronts could be held; that he had been obliged to risk much when planning battles, but that when he did so he had always been convinced that success would follow. It must be perfectly clear to everybody that our military situation is bad today.

I: There was no necessity in this affair for the exercise of more than that peculiar audacity which was generally characteristic of his decisions; that it was precisely when our position was a strong one that it was desirable to create an impression of strength by the decision to carry out the U-boat war.

LUDENDORFF: Such a bluff would not be audacity, but folly, and he would not do it.

I: We must not forget that we would be obliged to put off the beginning of the U-boat war for about the first six weeks of the favorable period of the year.

LUDENDORFF: Yes, that was to be regretted. Could we not limit ourselves to operations on the west coast? Were we so eager for the Dutch North Sea commerce?

I: We would leave the neutrals free exit to the ocean. It was precisely along the west coast, Cardiff, that many neutrals travel. The Dutch would no less regret the loss of a ship at that point than if it were lost in the North Sea.

Ludendorff admitted this.

I: Then there was also some talk of putting it off until after the presidential election. There was little sense in that. Wilson's reelection seemed to be assured, as the betting was in his favor 3 to 1.

LUDENDORFF: These political points of view had little weight for him, since the question for him was, as he had said, a purely military one.

The conference was suddenly broken up, as Ludendorff was sent for by the King of Bulgaria.

This morning, General Ludendorff sent for me again.

He thereupon returned to me the Kalkmann memorial. It had made a great impression on him; up to the present time he had not given so much thought to the results which would accrue after peace; that that was a very important point. But the fleet was continually seeking the tactical decision; your Excellency had told him that the U-boats were being drawn upon more than ever before for this purpose. Would it be possible for us to spare them and use them for the purposes of the U-boat war?

I answered by quoting the closing sentence of the report to the Emperor of the officer in command of the fleet during the Skagerrak battle. General Ludendorff agreed fully with this view. He thereupon summed up his views as follows:

He considered it important for the Navy to realize and to look upon as settled that the Supreme High Command of the Army was in favor of the U-boat war as soon as we had obtained a strong military foothold. Today we were not in that position. Ten days ago he had hoped that this would be the case by today. He had held five divisions in readiness for Transylvania but in the meantime had been obliged to send three of these divisions to the Austrian front; new contingents would not be ready before the end of the month, and how much could not happen before that time was reached! He was obliged to maintain his hold on Halicz, otherwise we would lose our last oil wells, and your Excellency had just called his attention to the danger of a threatened shortage in lubricating oils. (I respectfully ask to be informed with regard to this point.) In Schleswig we had three battalions; we were beginning to construct a position there with 20,000 men today, instead of two years ago. Today, it was an absolute temptation for the Danes; that the Austrians were like a sieve, whatever you poured in from above ran out again from below. If he only had to deal with Germans he would say that he believed that he would be able to establish the necessary military security by the beginning of October, but since it involved action with Austrians too, he was not in a position to make any promises at all, but only to say that he *hoped* to reach that point at that time.

I said that so far as we were concerned, that would be the extreme limit of time; that if the matter were put off further, we would run into spring and, in view of the Austrian situation, that would be too late.

General Ludendorff answered that he would not accept that as literally representing the fact, and that we probably would be able to drag them still further along with us; but in no event did he want matters of the U-boat war to trail along up to spring. We could rest assured, he said, that as soon as we were firmly on our feet, from a military standpoint, the war would start. The experiences of the war had taught us, as in the case of the English at the Somme, to gather as many forces as was possible and then to let them loose. To this extent, he looked upon it as favorable that we had not begun the U-boat war in the spring; that although it was not his affair to judge as to whether we had enough boats, it at least was a source of satisfaction to him to know that we had boats enough now so that he, even though a layman in the matter, believed in success; that he had spoken his mind without reserve because it was his desire that complete mutual confidence and understanding should exist between the Army and the Navy.

I estimate the situation as follows: General Ludendorff believes in the success of the U-boat war, perhaps all the more so on account of Kalkmann. He wants it. He does not believe that a favorable decision can be reached by means of land forces alone.

Relying on the Chancellor as an authority, he believes in the Danish peril. As long as the Chancellor sticks to this opinion—and he will do so, because he does not want the U-boat war and will delay it and perhaps bring it to naught by means of the Danish phantom, and all the more so, as in the end he must give in to the Field Marshal if the latter takes a firm stand—General Ludendorff will only agree to the U-boat war if he looks upon the military situation as absolutely secure. In the beginning of October, at the earliest.

It is therefore recommended:

1. With regard to General Ludendorff:

- (a) Emphasize the disadvantages which a delay will bring about.
- (b) Attempt through the reports, etc., of the attachés to minimize the Danish and Dutch menace.

2. With regard to the Chancellor:

To endeavor to persuade him to temper his judgment concerning the Danish menace. I believe that the Kalkmann memorial will have a very strong influence everywhere, with the Chancellor and with people like Ballin, perhaps through the latter on the former.

Note: I have only repeated my comments to the extent required for following out the train of thought.

v. BÜLOW.

160

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to Secretary of State v. Jagow

Rec. Berlin, September 26, 1916.

No. 145.

One enclosure in copy.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),

September 22, 1916.

Respectfully submitted to his Excellency the Secretary of State of the Foreign Office, Mr. v. Jagow, Berlin.

v. GRÜNAU.

[ENCLOSURE]

*Chief of the General Staff of the Armies in the Field, Political Division, to
Counselor of Legation v. Grünau*

PLESS, September 21, 1916.

According to a report received from Amsterdam, the authenticity of which can not be proved, the news is being spread there that the American Ambassador in Berlin, Mr. Gerard, had a long conference with his Excellency v. Jagow on September 13, the result of which was that he (Gerard) reached the conclusion that the unrestricted U-boat warfare was going to be initiated in the immediate future.

In his telegram reporting this matter to the American Government, he laid stress upon the point of how bitterly the German Government resented being restricted on America's account in its conduct of the U-boat war to the extent that many opportunities for torpedoing steamers loaded with troops and war material in the Channel were allowed to slip because they could not be torpedoed without warning. According to the German view, this stand was unjustifiable, and torpedoing without warning must, therefore, be resumed within a short time.

General Ludendorff would like to know, for the purpose of proving the credibility of the source of the information in question, whether this conversation took place.

v. BARTENWERFFER.

161

Secretary of State v. Jagow to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau

Re No. 145.

BERLIN, September 26, 1916.

One enclosure, to be kindly delivered to General Ludendorff for his knowledge and information.

v. JAGOW.

[ENCLOSURE]

BERLIN, *September 26, 1916.*

Sometime ago, I no longer remember the date but it may have been about the thirteenth of the month, Ambassador Gerard came to see me for the purpose of telling me in confidence that, as the result of a confidential letter which he had received from Colonel House, he would probably proceed to Washington in the immediate future, whither his colleagues had already gone from Paris and London. He believed that the President was going to take up with the ambassadors the possibility of a peace mediation, and it seemed to him that it would be quite important for him to speak with Field Marshal Hindenburg and eventually His Majesty the Emperor, besides conferring with the Imperial Chancellor before he left. It would also be a matter of great moment if he should be put in the position to state in America that we were no longer contemplating an unrestricted U-boat warfare. I informed the Ambassador, among other things, that at the present time there was no intention of carrying on an unrestricted U-boat warfare, but that America did not seem to be at all clearly instructed on the point of the sacrifices which we had met with as the result of our renunciation of it. That the U-boat war was a powerful weapon, with which we could strike very effective blows against our principal enemy, England. That every day, transports filled with troops and munitions of war were crossing the Channel to take part in the frightful battle which was going on against our poor people on the Somme; and that we were not in a position to blow these ships up, because identification was too difficult; that this was all done out of regard for the United States, which as yet had done nothing to contest the unwarranted assaults of the English or to prepare a road to peace. That it seemed to me that this consideration shown the United States was in no way sufficiently appreciated over there. The conversation then turned into other channels.

I am naturally uninformed as to the form in which Mr. Gerard reported the substance of this conversation.

Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau
 Telegram No. 1204.

BERLIN, *October 1, 1916.*

You will hand the following telegram to General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and a copy thereof to Admiral v. Holtzendorff.

Admiral v. Holtzendorff has just informed me in strict confidence that, according to information which had reached him today from the General

Headquarters, it was intended to begin the U-boat war around the 18th of October, in which case the boats would have to leave port on the 10th of the month with the necessary orders.

I can not conceive of a final decision being taken on this question and of my being merely informed thereof by the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, without an agreement sanctioned by His Majesty being reached on this point with me, and I desire to make the following comments in the premises:

It is well known that we have promised the United States to carry on the U-boat war under the rules of prize. We can recede from this promise only after an impressive statement of our reasons therefor, and after providing for the lapse of a period of time in which the United States would be enabled, in theory at least, to prevent the sailings of American ships and passengers to England. At the personal command of His Majesty, Count Bernstorff has been instructed to approach President Wilson on the subject of issuing an appeal for peace. In case Wilson is prevailed upon to do this, the probable rejection of the appeal by England and her allies, in connection with our acceptance, will constitute good grounds for us to withdraw the promise which we have made to the United States, and to do so in a manner morally justifiable to the world at large, particularly justifiable in the eyes of the European neutral Powers, and will thereby have an effect upon the attitude which they will probably assume later on. Count Bernstorff has not yet replied to the proposal, which was immediately communicated to him by telegram. Before the situation is cleared up in this respect, an announcement of the U-boat war, to be followed by steps for the purpose of carrying it into execution, according to orders of His Majesty, is absolutely impossible. And before this is done, I am scarcely in a position to obtain the agreement thereto of our allies.

For the rest, I may make the following comment, partly in repetition of, and partly supplementary to, oral remarks already made.

1. I consider that a break with the United States, followed by an American declaration of war, is certain, unless the peace move should create an entirely new situation.

2-4. (Comments regarding European neutrals.)

5. The effect of the U-boat war on England remains the subject of uncertain speculation. Matters favorable to us are: Bad or only medium crops in England, North America, Canada, and Argentina. Opposed to this are the following facts:

- (a) The impossibility of the hermetical sealing-up of England;
- (b) The possibility of the importation of absolutely necessary material by night or under the escort of a convoy to England without being molested;
- (c) The impossibility of stopping the passage of transports between England and France, although it is possible that they might be interrupted partially and from time to time.

As the result, the prospect of being able to inflict heavy damages on England must be admitted; but the probability of inducing England to sue for peace if America, Holland, Denmark and Spain take her side, is at least problematical.

The perspectives which are opened by these considerations are of such enormous seriousness, and contain in themselves such far-reaching possibilities, that, aside from the move which is pending in the United States, these questions must be submitted to His Majesty in general council before the final decision is reached. A more detailed presentation in writing of the foregoing follows at the earliest possible moment.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

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Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. Berlin, October 3, 1916.

Telegram No. 774.

Confidential.

Re telegram No. 1204.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),

October 2, 1916.

The Field Marshal begs to communicate the following to your Excellency:

I merely calculated on the *possibility* that the U-boat war might begin in the middle of October. On the occasion of the last conversation of Naval Captain v. Bülow with General Ludendorff, the latter laid particular stress on the fact that the final determination could only follow in agreement with your Excellency. Naturally, I shall maintain this view under all conditions. Captain v. Bülow states that he merely expressed his private opinion in the course of his report to Admiral v. Holtzendorff that the Supreme High Command of the Army would give their consent to the U-boats leaving port on the 10th of October. v. Hindenburg.

GRÜNAU.

164

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. Berlin, October 2, 1916.

Telegram No. 776.

In connection with No. 774.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),

October 2, 1916.

The Field Marshal and General Ludendorff have repeatedly and with feeling announced both to his Excellency v. Treutler and myself how greatly they regret that, as a result of the misunderstanding resulting from Captain

v. Bülow's report to Admiral v. Holtzendorff, the impression was created in your Excellency's mind that a decision had been reached with regard to a question which could only have been finally decided in participation with your Excellency. Both gentlemen expressed themselves repeatedly to the effect that the loyal cooperation now existing with your Excellency can not be allowed to be disturbed by any lack of harmony, and that nothing was further from their intention than to carry on a separate policy behind your Excellency's back, or in any way to intermeddle with political matters; that the more numerous the material differences of opinion, the more frankly must opinions be exchanged, but that they had no use for a game of hide and seek.

This in no way affects the situation with regard to my question of yesterday in the form of a private letter to Secretary of State v. Jagow at the instance of General Ludendorff, since as a matter of fact General Ludendorff is calculating on the possibility of an early commencement of the action referred to.

GRÜNAU.

165

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, October 5, 1916.
Telegram No. 796.
Confidential.

SPECIAL TRAIN,
October 5, 1916.

In the conference of yesterday with Admiral v. Holtzendorff, His Majesty stated very plainly that there could be no possibility of launching the U-boat war in the near future; that for the present we should have to allow existing situations to develop (negotiations with the United States, change of ministry in Russia . . .), and should not allow them to be interfered with by the U-boat war. The Admiral had asked His Majesty for his view, since he would have to make other dispositions of the U-boats to fit the case. As a result, it has now been settled that two new large U-boats will leave the North Sea for the Mediterranean, whereas two of the smaller ones there will be released for the Black Sea.

The representations of Minister v. Kühlmann have had an extraordinarily good effect, and appear to have materially strengthened His Majesty during the last few days in his disinclination, more and more definitely announced, against the unrestricted U-boat warfare at the present time. Admiral v. Holtzendorff was very much impressed with Kühlmann's comments, and so was the Supreme High Command of the Army, which appears to be satisfied with putting off the U-boat war.

GRÜNAU.

*Chief of the General Staff General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg to the Imperial
Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg*

Rec. Berlin, October 6, 1916.
Re telegram No. 1204.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
October 5, 1916.

In the session held in Pless at the end of August or at the beginning of September (I have no distinct recollection of the date), your Excellency stated, as I understood it, that the decision as to whether the unrestricted U-boat war should be carried on lay with the Supreme High Command of the Army. Your Excellency announced as a reservation, however, that our allies should be heard on the point, and that certain treaty arrangements should be made with other nations.

It was likewise the intention of your Excellency to announce to the members of the Reichstag that the responsibility for the settlement of the U-boat question lay with the Supreme High Command of the Army. The terms in which this was done have not come to my knowledge. I assume, as the result of numerous reports which have been made to me, that it is likewise assumed throughout political circles that the responsibility for the U-boat war rests completely on the shoulders of the Supreme High Command of the Army.

I believe that I am now justified in assuming from the contents of the attached telegram that your Excellency is taking a fundamentally different attitude from what I had thought. I understand this attitude thoroughly; but for the purpose of definitely determining as a matter of fact to what extent the Supreme High Command of the Army will be responsible for the unrestricted U-boat warfare, I should appreciate an expression of opinion on this point.

V. HINDENBURG.

Memorial of Secretary of State of the Interior Helfferich

Rec. Berlin, October 6, 1916.

GERMANY'S IMPORTS FROM NEUTRAL CONTIGUOUS COUNTRIES

Germany is not even now so completely shut off from foreign territory in the matter of the amount of imports as is very generally thought to be the case even in this country. Rather is German national commerce still connected by means of strong media of communications with the outside neutral world, that is, with contiguous neutrals and those with whom we can still keep in touch by water transportation. German commerce statistics

still show for the first eight months of the year 1916 imports to the amount of 4,222 million marks against 5,248 million marks for a similar period of time in the year 1915, and 11,638 million marks in the entire peace year of 1913. Of course the volume of imports has received a more severe set-back than import values, since, as the result of the general increase of prices during the war period, a given money value is represented by a far less volume of material than would be the case in times of peace.

Our imports, with the exception of restricted amounts of special important raw stuffs needed for munition purposes, such as aluminium, nickel, ferro-silicium, consist mainly in foodstuffs. As the detailed synopses submitted herewith show, by far the most important items are cattle and meat, butter, cheese, eggs, and fish.

A notable portion of these imports, particularly butter, meat and cheese, is consigned to the War Department for the maintenance of the troops. The remaining portion of the imports goes almost entirely into the great cities and the industrial districts, the maintenance of which, as is the case in times of peace, is taken care of to a very considerable extent by foreign imports. In particular do the workers engaged in the metal industries, especially those which are actively engaged at the present time in the preparation of munitions of war, need a good quality of food—one that is very strong in fats, such as the foodstuffs which are imported—in view of the taxing physical efforts which they are called upon to make. During the early summer months of this year, which constituted a period particularly difficult from the point of view of sustenance, there was serious danger of a hunger strike taking place in a large number of those working branches of the heavy industries operating under the authority of the War Department. Had it not been for the foodstuffs which were imported from the outside world, we would have scarcely been able to avoid, either here or in a number of the large cities, the collapse of our food system, as the natural consequence of a very bad crop.

As is shown in the figures presented by enclosure No. 1, in the case of a number of materials, particularly meat, cheese, and fish, present importations supersede to a notable extent the amounts imported in time of peace. And at the same time, not only have we been deprived of the great amounts of foodstuffs imported from Russia, but also of the very considerable shipments which come in from Austria-Hungary in time of peace, since this country, as the result of the needs of its armies, and of the temporary curtailment of isolated provinces of unusual fertility in the matter of country products, has ceased to export foodstuffs with the exception of eggs, and on the contrary has for its own purposes to have recourse to a portion of the imports from the remaining neutral countries. In this connection, Holland and Denmark take first place as markets for imports, and with them, as regards special individual products, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland.

Happily, we have been fortunate enough to obtain for Germany in time of war a great percentage of foodstuffs which are exported to England from these countries in time of peace. This result, which with regard to some of the most important products is set out in the form of statistics in the enclosures relating to Holland and Denmark, is due, not least of all, to the neutral attitude maintained by the governments of the exporting countries which have been mentioned. England has not failed to attempt to destroy or at any rate restrict, the importation of foodstuffs from these countries to Germany. After it had succeeded in materially depriving Germany of importations from transoceanic countries, and particularly importations of fats, colonial products and raw stuffs, as the result of the ruthless application of its sea power in connection with its working organizations in the neutral countries, it made the most persistent efforts to cut us off from the importation of the local products of even contiguous neutral countries. England already has available a very efficient means to this end, speaking from the purely commercial view-point, since Holland and Norway (and Switzerland, too, for that matter) are dependent upon the importation of breadstuffs and provender, and Denmark on the importation of provender. The importation of these materials is subject to the control of England and its allies, and therefore, without their permission, it would be impossible for the neutral States of themselves to set up a permanent system whereby the people could get enough food or the cattle sufficient provender.

The results of the English policy, which has led in the course of the past few months to a number of agreements between England and Holland, Norway, and Sweden, are manifested by a gradual diminishing of the totals of imports figured. Germany is attempting to counteract this by withholding from exportation to the neutral States German products of a particularly important nature, such as coal, iron, potash, chemicals, etc.

The ruthless carrying out of the U-boat war would either put an end to or greatly burden the exportation of foodstuffs from Holland and Denmark to England. It is, however seriously doubtful that Germany could get the benefit of this in the form of an increase of imports. For the importation of wheatstuffs and provender to Holland and Denmark would be at once cut off by England in so far as it could be carried out at all in the face of the ruthless U-boat war, at the moment when it needed the available tonnage—its own or foreign—for military purposes or to insure the necessary foodstuffs for its own maintenance. The increase in the cost of living, which already exists in the neutral countries, would become unbearable, and the maintenance of live stock conditions as they have existed up to this time would be impossible. Under these circumstances every government would be obliged to provide for the sustenance of its own people by commandeering the live stock which had been butchered as the result of the shortage of provender,

and by hoarding up preserved provisions, such as meat, butter, milk, and eggs, and on this account to prevent any exportation whatsoever. Thus, quite independent of the political considerations involved in the launching of a ruthless U-boat war, we must take into our calculations the possibility of a great restriction, or even a complete curtailment, of the importation of foodstuffs from neighboring countries.

In opposition to such an eventuality, an improved grain crop, taken in connection with the harvest of the occupied territories, permits a more favorable estimate of the situation than that of last year. On the other hand, the potato crop showed less favorable results, and the falling off of shipments from Roumania must also be taken into consideration. And above all, Austria-Hungary has very moderate returns in the way of crops. So that, in the matter of provisions, we shall be pinched in spite of the good grain crop, and the curtailment of imports of meat and animal products from contiguous countries would still have to be considered very serious even through they are not to be regarded as an actual menace, as was the case last year.

ENGLAND'S SITUATION AS TO FOODSTUFFS

The feeding of the English people stands and falls with the wheat supply, from one fourth to one fifth of which depends upon local production and the remainder upon imports. Last year's crop was very good in England, and the crops in the most important of those countries drawn upon for the purpose, the United States and Canada, very much more bountiful than ever before. So England was, therefore, in the position to cover her necessities even superabundantly from these countries, which lay most conveniently to her hand. In the past harvest year, no less than 88 per cent of England's imports in wheat came from the two great North American countries, and the importations from Argentina, India, and Australia, subjected to a longer journey by sea, was limited to about 11 per cent of the total imports. The total imports of wheat and flour was so bountiful that England was able to start the new fiscal year, which is calculated from the 1st of September, with a greater supply than in the preceding years. The situation for England will be materially less favorable, so far as the outlook upon the new fiscal year is concerned. The output of the local English crop is notably inferior to that of the preceding year. Both the United States and Canada were hard hit by an off year. Numerous figures in proof of this are submitted in enclosure No. IV. So England will be put to the necessity of depending more than ever upon more distant countries, Argentina, India, and Australia, for the crop, which can not be shipped until next year.

In order to make the situation still more difficult for England, I have started negotiations for the purpose of making inroads upon the grain markets, with means well adapted to the end, so that, acting under cover in

Argentina as well as in the United States, prices will be driven up and, as far as possible, great quantities will be secured. I ask that this communication be considered confidential in the interests of the plans mapped out.

THE INROADS ON BRITISH TONNAGE

The Admiralty Staff of the Navy expects that, by launching the unrestricted U-boat war, it will succeed in bringing down about 600,000 tons of shipping a month. On this computation, the sinking of about 4 million tons would be expected to take place in six and seven months. As the result of sinking such an amount of tonnage, the hope is entertained of wearing England out and of making her tired of the idea of war, even if it should not result in bringing her to her knees.

Including sailing vessels and the colonial tonnage, the English merchant fleet amounted to over 20 million tons before the war. The net losses during the war were not as excessive, according to reliable information, as they were generally thought to be, and could not be considered as exceeding from 500,000 to 800,000 tons. It would appear that 8 million tons of the merchant fleet were taken over for war purposes. This being so, there are about 12 million tons left available for commerce and if, in the course of six to seven months, 4 million tons of these ships are sunk, then there will remain about 8 million tons.

The idea that, in case States which up to this time have remained neutral were drawn into the war, the English tonnage would probably be increased either by the ships of such States or by the German tonnage lying in their ports, may be disregarded. In no case can it be asserted with authority that England will be unable to maintain her stand with a merchant fleet of 8 million tons. For the purposes of comparison, we may point to the fact that before the war Germany, by means of her own merchant fleet of 5 million tons, was able to meet the demand of her own needs, including those of a foreign commerce which pushed hard on the heels of the British and which was carried on over about three quarters of the established maritime routes. Finally, in case of urgent need, England would be in a position, and would also be prepared, to draw upon the 8 million tons which had been taken for military purposes.

The prospect of making such inroads upon the British tonnage as to have a definite effect upon the termination of the war would appear, therefore, to be uncertain and far distant.

THE STARVING OF ENGLAND

The English ports are entered, even at this time, by loaded vessels arriving at a rate which has been estimated to be about 5 million tons a month. The sinking of 600,000 tons which has been held out as the prospect would, therefore, affect only 12 per cent of the ships that are now running in. Even if

we assume that double this percentage of the tonnage entering British ports could be sunk, that would of course bring England to a very desperate situation, but still would fail to insure that England would be brought face to face with starvation and for that reason would be forced to sue for peace.

Of course England would be very seriously crippled in view of the fact that the food situation of this harvest year is so much less favorable to England than it has been heretofore during the course of the war. But the question remains as to whether this damage—particularly in view of the unusually large wheat supplies in England which will necessarily follow the harvest—will be so increased within a comparatively brief time, as to result in England being forced to sue for peace.

THE U-BOAT WAR AND THE UNITED STATES

After all that has passed, there can be no doubt of the fact that the launching of a ruthless U-boat war before the presidential election in the United States would result in a break with the United States under any and all conditions, and if launched after the elections, the same result would probably take place.

It is erroneous to assume that in case of a break, the United States would not be able to assist the Entente to a greater degree than they have already done.

The financial assistance which thus far has been afforded the Entente by the United States has by no means come up to the expectations of the Entente, nor has it in any way approached the financial capacity of the Union to render such assistance. England and France took up a great concerted loan of \$500,000,000 in the United States in September, 1915. There suits of this loan failed utterly to meet the expectations entertained concerning it by the Entente. Later, only small English and French financial operations, mostly of a commercial character, have been possible of conclusion. It is only very lately that England and France, operating separately this time, have been able to conclude loans of approximately the same amount as that of the preceding year, but only at a very heavy rate of interest and backed by adequate guarantees in the form of good neutral securities. The difficulties which today confront the Allies in the matter of American loans would disappear if a break with the United States should come. In that case, the United States would throw into the balance on the side of the Entente the entire weight of that financial strength of hers which has increased to an amazing degree during the war.

It follows that America will be able to increase to a marked extent, and without the slightest doubt, the munitions industry which it has carried on up to the present time; the figures with regard to iron and steel production in the United States and in Germany are compared in enclosure No. V; according to these figures, the probable steel production in Germany is

about 14 million tons as compared with a production in the United States of about 40 million tons.

And finally, in a war in which the factor of numbers alone available to either side is of such enormous importance, we can not afford to leave out of consideration a country of 100 million inhabitants who belong to a cultivated and a hardy race, viewed from a purely military standpoint. The example of the British in the present war, and also the example of the Union in the Civil War, shows what can be accomplished by such unschooled forces at a time of crisis.

THE EUROPEAN NEUTRALS

A break with the United States would undoubtedly have a far-reaching influence on the attitude of the other neutral Powers, including the neutral Powers of Europe.

The combined pressure of England and the United States would have its effect upon the attitude of the European neutrals, who, because of the sinking of their ships and the destruction of their crews as the result of the ruthless conduct of a U-boat war, would be influenced against us. The immediate and effective blockade against the admission of transoceanic breadstuffs and the importation of provender, would jeopardize in the extreme the maintenance of the population in the countries affected, particularly of those persons who are less well to do. Moreover, the classes of neutrals in those countries who take an unbiased view of the situation or who actually entertain feelings of kindness toward us, would, under these circumstances, hardly be in a position to resist successfully the English-American pressure.

Those best versed in the course of events in the neutral countries agree with this summing up of the probable development of the situation. (Here follow comments concerning the European neutrals.) But, in view of the feeling which exists in wide circles, and which is not exactly friendly to Germany, that the example of the remaining neutrals would not fail to make a lasting impression is beyond question. As indicative of the feeling which the ruthless conduct of the U-boat war would beget in the case of neutrals whom it would affect, let me call to mind the excitement which the sinking of a few fruit boats, in full observance of the rules of war on commerce, caused in Spain.

EFFECT ON OUR ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION

Although it is true that all considerations for the future must yield to the necessity of first bringing the war to a victorious end, nevertheless we can not fail to bear in mind the great significance which the holding together of a strong block of neutral States up to the end of the war would necessarily have on our subsequent economic development. If at the end of the war there are left on one side Germany and her allies and no other nation, and on the other

side all the rest of the important Powers of the world; then the renewal of trade relations absolutely essential, not only to our economic position before the world but to our political standing as well, will be rendered difficult to an inconceivable extent and for an indeterminate time.

CONCLUSION

All this leads to the following conclusion:

We are, therefore, only in the position to launch and carry out a ruthless U-boat war with prospects of success, if—

(1) We shall be able to defend ourselves at all times against the inevitable menace of our neutral neighboring States, in having at our disposal for this purpose military forces beyond any question sufficient for the purposes in hand;

(2) We are in a position to deliver the blow against England so surely and so quickly that she must sue for peace before the United States can throw with full force the great weight of its financial and industrial power and its great population into the balance.

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*Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to the Chief of the General Staff,
General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg*

BERLIN, October 16, 1916.

I have the honor to state in reply to the esteemed favor of your Excellency of the fifth instant, that on the occasion of the conferences of the 30th and 31st of August, in Pless, I deferred announcing my final conclusion with regard to the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, as I took occasion to state with emphasis at that time, until your Excellency should have reached your opinion on the matter. The standpoint of your Excellency indicated at that time was that, greatly as you were inclined to the adoption of this most powerful instrumentality of warfare, the undeveloped military situation, particularly with regard to a probable unfriendly if not hostile attitude on the part of Holland and Denmark, was such as to make it impossible for you to take a stand either for or against the proposition. In response to the question which has repeatedly and urgently been put to me with regard to the attitude of the Supreme High Command of the Army, whether in confidential conferences with the party leaders, or in the present conferences in committee at the Reichstag, I have consistently replied that, up to the present time, the Supreme High Command has, for military reasons, not been able to give a definite reply.

Moreover, I may make the following observations: An order issuing from His Majesty the Emperor for the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war constitutes in itself an expression of military commanding power. But in view of the fact that a ruthless U-boat war will be directed not only against enemy ships but against neutral ships as well, it has a direct effect upon our relations to the neutral States and to this extent is an expression of foreign policy. Moreover, the unrestricted U-boat war can only be initiated after our promises made to the United States with regard to the conduct of our submarine warfare are revoked, and we are enabled to modify the arrangements which we have made with Denmark and Sweden accordingly. These, too, are acts of foreign policy, for which I, in case they are ordered by His Majesty, have to bear the sole responsibility, which is a constitutional responsibility and is incapable of being delegated, although the opinion of your Excellency, as I certainly do not need to call to your particular attention, will be entitled to a wholly unusual consideration in connection with my decision, whatever it may be. Finally, I hope that your Excellency will agree with me in the opinion that, quite aside from the question of direct and here existent bearing on our foreign policy, a measure as radical as that presented by ruthless U-boat warfare can not be definitely decided upon in the absence of the Imperial Chancellor.

I sincerely regret that the course of the August negotiations has not brought about such a clearing up of the situation as to eliminate the possibility of every doubt.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

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Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau
Telegram No. 1236.
For General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg.

BERLIN, October 8, 1916.

Since, in view of the abandonment for the present of the plan of launching the ruthless U-boat war, a war on commerce is, by command of His Majesty, to be carried on with vigor and by the use of all the U-boats at our command, and in accordance with the law of prize, I propose to make the following announcement tomorrow morning to the Reichstag committee:

For the present, all the reasons carefully submitted by me and my colleagues in the course of negotiations up to this time, are against the so-called ruthless U-boat war. On the other hand, England's difficulties in the matter of provisions and foodstuffs inject into the war situation an element favorable to us of which we must take advantage to the full extent of our powers. In

reaching the conclusion in question with regard to the situation, I am in complete accord with the Supreme High Command; General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg agrees with me that at this time the carrying-out of an unrestricted U-boat war is not practicable, but that, on the other hand, it is absolutely essential to continue to obstruct English imports as far as possible with the means at our command in the prosecution of a war on commerce. The Admiralty Staff is of the opinion that the results of the U-boat war carried out on this basis will be very definitely increased, and has taken the necessary steps in this direction. In view of the great unrest which has come about as the result of the differences of opinion concerning the U-boat war, I should be particularly grateful to your Excellency should I receive your cooperation in connection with this announcement.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

170

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. December 1, 1916.
Telegram No. 1006.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
December 1, 1916.

As I have been confidentially informed, the Field Marshal committed himself rather definitely, in conversation with Mr. v. Heydebrandt on the occasion of his visit yesterday, to an early commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare.

GRÜNAU.

171

The Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral v. Holtzendorff, to the First Quartermaster General, General Ludendorff

Rec. Berlin, December 10, 1916.¹
Copy.

BERLIN, December 10, 1916.

OPINION ON THE CONVERSATION OF GENERAL LUDENDORFF WITH SECRETARY OF LEGATION GRÜNAU WITH REGARD TO THE U-BOAT WAR, COMMUNICATED BY CAPTAIN V. BÜLOW OF THE NAVY

I

I absolutely agree with the attitude of the Supreme High Command, that it is necessary to communicate to the United States at once our attitude with regard to attacks by U-boats upon armed merchantmen, and thereafter to

¹ Sent to the Secretary of State of the Foreign Office without address.

act accordingly. Yesterday, I dispatched to the Foreign Office the notes bearing upon this point, which are herewith submitted.

II

It is agreed that it is necessary, before a proclamation of the unrestricted U-boat war, to revoke the promise we made to the United States on the 4th of May. I am, nevertheless, somewhat in doubt as to whether this is now opportune, not only on account of the peace move which we expect on the part of America, but for the following reason as well:

If we revoke the promises which we have made the United States at a date far in advance of the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, the British will take it as a certain indication of an early launching of the war and will endeavor to prepare to meet it. There will then arise the danger that they may, after all, succeed during that period which would be left at their disposal, and in which comparatively few assaults would be made upon imports, in introducing, with the help of these imports and the provisions already on hand in the country, a successful rationing system which might perhaps be the means of postponing the final result of the U-boat war to an extent by no means inconsiderable. To introduce a system of reduced rations only at the moment of the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, at a time when there can be no possibility of even comparative security in the matter of introducing their imports and at a time when, above all, the greatest part of the neutral traffic, which amounts to over a third of the British imports, will have been frightened off or held back by the application of military measures—and I place the greatest reliance upon this particular result—and at a time moreover, when the U-boat war will make every attempted regulation of the shipping space impossible, and corresponding imports impossible as well, seems practically out of the question. This leads us to a consideration of the question as to when, at the latest, the unrestricted U-boat war must be launched in order to bring about a favorable decision for us in the course of the next year.

If England is not ready for peace by the first of July, 1917, as the result of shortage in imports and losses inflicted on its merchant fleet, it will be all the less inclined to draw the necessary political inferences from the existing situation if it is able to comfort its people with the hope that they will only have to wait for the next few weeks before stocking up with new provisions as the result of the new harvest. It is, therefore, necessary to have the unrestricted U-boat war launched at exactly the right time, in order to have England give in before July. As matters stand today, we can bank upon the fact that this will be brought about in five months at the latest, by the conduct of an unrestricted U-boat war. This gives February 1 as the date for the launching of the U-boat war, a date beyond which, for the reasons above given, the matter should by no means be put off.

Over and beyond these military considerations, there is a political reason which conclusively shows that the revocation of the May promise and the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare should occur at one and the same time. If the U-boat war does not follow immediately upon the heels of the revocation, the English will have time to mobilize the United States and the European neutrals against us with all the means at their command, and the hostile attitude toward us in the United States will have time to crystallize into a declaration of war against Germany. There is reason for the hope that, in view of the impression created by the immediate launching of the unrestricted U-boat war and of its absolutely conclusive results, the United States will confine itself to the use of big words, and, for the rest, will wait for a little while to see what results the first weeks of the U-boat war will bring. The Navy is ready to begin it at any time, as was made plain in the conferences of December. It is more convinced than ever that it will bring about the desired results. The reservation which was announced by the Imperial Chancellor, that "An energetic U-boat war which treats armed steamers and war-ships alike, but does not result in making enemies of the United States and the neutral Powers, would probably bring about complete success more certainly than an unrestricted U-boat war against the whole world," can not, in view of the results of the last months, be supported with convincing evidence; but the fact must be greatly emphasized that it is only the unrestricted U-boat war which can stop neutral importations to England, that is to say, put an end to 35 per cent of the total importations and, in this way, and in this way only, bring about quick results. With regard to the question whether our military situation allows or justifies a break with the United States, the Navy will depend for an answer upon the decision of the Supreme High Command of the Army.

V. HOLTZENDORFF.

172

Extract from a personal letter of Counselor of Embassy v. Haniel to Minister v. Treutler

Rec. Berlin, December 24, 1916.

WASHINGTON, November 10, 1916.

. . . But otherwise, the feeling, above all in high society and in the press, is, as you know, almost exclusively "pro-Ally." In view of the close connection with England, from the standpoint of history, blood, speech, society, finance, culture, etc.—and, in many of these relations, also with France—this should cause no particular surprise. And in addition to this there are Belgium, the *Lusitania*, and the fact that here we are considered responsible for the war, in spite of all proofs to the contrary. Notwithstand-

ing his commercial instincts, the American is *very* sentimental—often hysterically so—and in the case referred to commercial instinct and sentiment point in the same direction. However inconceivable and disgusting this attitude may appear to us, we shall have to reckon with it. Asquith described the one-sided point of view, and not incorrectly at that, when he said “let the neutrals complain about our blockade and other measures taken, as much as they may, the fact remains that no neutral national has ever lost his life as the result of it.”

Since the “armistice” in the U-boat war, the feeling has quieted down here to an appreciable extent. The trips of the *Deutschland* helped too. But as long as it just remains nothing but a simple “armistice,” and the sword of Damocles hangs over events in the shape of a recommencement of a ruthless U-boat war, positive and effective work is out of the question. Neither is anything of a financial nature to be expected on this side, since relations can become jeopardized overnight. If this danger did not exist, and, moreover, if it were not constantly harped on by Germany, and if unfortunate accidents such as the present case of the *Marina* were not always stirring up public opinion against us, the public, and official circles as well, would present a much more energetic front to the arbitrary acts of the British, which are making themselves felt more and more. Very many American politicians gifted with insight agree upon the point that if the U-boat question could once be allowed to rest in peace for a moderate length of time—not only from the point of view of actual performance by the avoidance of “mistakes,” but also from that of public discussion,—the Government would be forced to take steps against England. For the present the Allies and their friends make use of the U-boat danger as a shield and a diversion. Of course, I can only judge the question of the recommencement of the unrestricted U-boat war from the point of view of this side. Above all, it is a purely military question. Are we—in spite of all countermeasures and quiet preparations on the part of the British—in a position to cut off England so completely from all imports that she will be obliged to conclude peace within a short time, that is, before America can come to her assistance with all its strength? Shall we, at the same time, be able to stop all imports by way of France and Calais? For, as long as one way remains open, England, supported by the certain prospect that America and the other Powers which have remained neutral up to the present time will come to her assistance, will continue to hold out. We can see in the example of Russia just what only one free mode of ingress means.

There is one point on which we must be absolutely clear. A withdrawal from, or even a material limitation of, the exercise of the so-called concession which we made to the United States this spring in connection with the U-boat war, means war with the United States—and therewith probably also war with Holland and others, which otherwise would be starved out. This

is the absolute conviction of all those here who have paid any attention to the question, and this includes those who were formerly inclined to a different view. No government and no party would venture, without committing political suicide, to give in to Germany on this question, which is one involving the lives of American citizens, after America has so definitely announced what it considers its international rights. The national feeling has risen to such a pitch during the war, and public opinion has become so hysterically sensitive as the result of the continually-recurring incidents, exchanges of notes, and proddings by the press, that neither one of them will be able to bear any further burdens of this nature.

A revocation of our promises would be immediately followed by the diplomatic break. Our warnings would not be observed, and the death of an American as the result of a U-boat attack would result in a declaration of war. It is certain that the majority of the people in the country desire to see that peace maintained which gave an impulse to the country which it had never dreamed of, and they are grateful to Wilson because "he kept us out of war." But let the diplomatic breach occur, and the pressure will be too strong. Even the most zealous apostles of peace would not be able to endure the reproach that, by breaking off diplomatic relations, they had in a sense given Germany a license to kill all Americans in the future. Of course, our enemies, in order to add fuel to the flames, will exert all their influence, particularly upon the press, financial circles, and society. As a matter of fact, there is a very strong party in existence which regrets that America has not long since taken up the fight against us on the side of "civilization and freedom."

It is plainly observable from here how England seizes every opportunity to bring about, if possible, a break between the United States and Germany. It is publicly known that England attributes much less importance to the dangers of an unrestricted U-boat warfare than she does to the advantages of drawing America over to the side of the Allies. This should certainly give us something to think about. From this view-point it certainly looks as if, by reverting to the unrestricted U-boat war, we were merely playing into our enemies' hands.

I repeat once more that these are all impressions gathered from the attitude on this side, and to that extent may certainly be one-sided.

One fact, however, remains my immutable conviction, and that is that the resumption of a ruthless U-boat war means war with the United States, and in the interests of the cause I can not urge upon you too seriously to submit this conviction over and over again to the proper authorities and have them recognize its true force, so that we shall indulge in no self-deceit or false hopes in this connection, *à la* England.

It is equally certain, according to my opinion, that such a war would immediately be carried on by setting in full motion America's endless resources

in man-power, money, war industries, ships, etc. Nor are we to expect any effective opposition to be supplied by the German-American element here. They would not be able, nor would they attempt, to bear the brunt of such a national tempest. The days of the *Lusitania* proved this to be the fact.

Finally, there is no necessity for me to point out the incalculable moral and economic disadvantages which would result from our going to war with the United States—and probably with additional neutral Powers—disadvantages whose effect would extend far beyond the duration of the war and which would add much to the difficulties of an economic reconstruction.

Today, the election has finally been decided and, as a matter of fact, in Wilson's favor. I believe that for us this is the more favorable outcome. For, just what attitude Hughes would take with regard to Germany is not easy to foretell, in view of the fact that Roosevelt and his war-hungry followers would be on his back.

In any event, a concession on the U-boat matter would be just as much out of the question for him as it would be for Wilson. But above all, I should, in case Hughes had been elected, have been apprehensive of the period extending from now on until March, during which Hughes would not have been at the helm and Wilson would have been powerless in view of his coming retirement. Just what Wilson is going to do in the present state of international politics remains to be seen. Of course alarming incidents, such as the cases of the *Marina* and the *Arabia*, etc., turning up in such numbers as they are at present, are to be regretted; for they are grist to the mill of our enemies and opponents on this side, and we can be devoutly thankful if we get off without a break, although of course an immediate explanation from us is to be expected. It is to be hoped that this will turn out more happily than in the case of the *Sussex*.

But now a truce to politics. I hope that you will not think that my views have been colored altogether too much by my surroundings. But perhaps we see many things in a more correct perspective when we look at them from a distance. I can readily believe that fire-eaters find very little good to say of us over here, but one can only act according to one's true convictions, particularly when the question involved is one of such tremendous importance.

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Secretary of State Helfferich to Secretary of State Zimmermann

Rec. Berlin, December 20, 1916.
Confidential.

BERLIN, December 18, 1916.

I have the honor to transmit to your Excellency for your kind consideration a copy of one of the memoranda drawn up by Privy Counselor Albert

in New York, with regard to the results of the unrestricted U-boat war upon the United States.

HELFFERICH.

[ENCLOSURE]

NEW YORK, *November 6, 1916.*

YOUR HONORED EXCELLENCY:

My hope to be able to return to Germany has not as yet been consummated. They have denied me a safe-conduct, and the Captain of the *Deutschland* refused to take me with him on technical grounds, after calling my attention to instructions received from the naval authorities. As a last possibility, it may turn out that the American Government will still issue me my safe-conduct. The Acting Secretary of State, who is very well known to me personally, promised me that he would again take up the question with the English Ambassador, or that some other opportunity for getting across safely will turn up. That will require time, even under the most favorable conditions. I must, therefore, make the subject of a written report a number of matters which I had hoped to be able to transmit to your Excellency orally, and which will be submitted to you at any rate.

In this connection, I ask your Excellency's permission to express myself to you with regard to the question of the U-boat war. From everything that I hear, from what I glean from the newspapers, and from private sources confidentially received, it is possible that the pressure of public opinion in Germany, of the Conservative Party, and of those members of the Reichstag who make common cause with them, exerted in the direction of the resumption of the unrestricted U-boat warfare, may be renewed at any time. This question is, in my opinion, no more nor less than the crux of our foreign policy. I believe that the ultimate outcome of the war will depend upon the decision rendered on this point. For that reason I venture to give expression to my personal opinion in the attached memorandum which, although it may offer nothing new by way of argument, will still be regarded as of some interest, being the view of an unprejudiced national most intimately acquainted with the American situation. I am all the more certain of my reasoning because I have wavered in my own opinion and have only recently reached a more fixed decision.

It is appropriate that I should turn to my friend Meyer-Gerhardt, who has become acquainted with the American situation during the war as the result of personal observation, and to whom I have sent a copy of this memorandum. Of course, I am well aware that your Excellency has maintained his interest in American questions, an interest which, I venture to hope, has been quickened by your sympathy with my lot. Even if your Excellency were not to share my views, I can at least have the feeling that I have done my share towards the solution of the question. With the request that you

will maintain your friendly interest in me during this rather difficult period,
I am, your honored Excellency,

Yours most respectfully,

ALBERT.

N. B. In view of the closing of the mails, and further, in view of the unexpected delay in the announcement of the result of the elections, I must unfortunately refrain from discussing the result in question. In my opinion, it will not have any material effect upon the U-boat war in any case; I would not make any changes in material points of the statement which I am submitting.

THE UNRESTRICTED U-BOAT WAR

The use of the submarine has reached a point of importance from military and political grounds, which may have a deciding influence on the outcome of the entire war. The question is whether Germany will make use of this weapon against merchant ships without any restrictions whatsoever, or will submit herself for the purposes of U-boat war to those restrictions which have been announced by the greatest of the neutral States, the United States of America, in the interpretations of international law adhered to by it up to the present time. The outcome of this interpretation is that the German submarines only have the right to send an enemy or a neutral merchant ship to the bottom if the vessel is given full warning and if, when the ship is stopped and her destruction contemplated, opportunity is given to the crew and passengers to escape in safety. The observance of this condition is looked upon as a restriction which can scarcely be carried out; the failure to observe it is looked upon as a means of defeating England.

I

If, as a matter of fact, it were possible to force England to sue for peace as the result of an unrestricted conduct of the U-boat war, it is obvious that it would be unnecessary to pay any attention to the attitude of disapproval of the neutral Powers, and particularly the attitude of the United States of America. Whether Germany is strong enough to bring this about, I am not in a position to judge. All the probabilities are opposed to such a conclusion. In connection with this, it is pointed out here that up to this time we have not been able to cause serious interference to, or in any way to jeopardize, the transportation to France of English weapons, munitions of war or troops. England has rendered the small stretch between Dover and Calais proof against submarines by a system of nets and patrol boats. If we were not successful in breaking through this defense, England would be able,

even if we were successful in blockading the west coast, to transport all materials, foodstuffs and troops, etc., overseas circuitously by way of France, although to a certain extent with great discomfort and difficulty (transportation by train inside of France, transportation across the Channel). As a result, the question would be whether we had enough submarines and whether their various activities would be sufficiently vigorous to bring about an effective blockade of the English west coast and the northern and north-western coasts of France. The blockade would have to be so effective as to actually prevent movement on the part of the transports, except in isolated cases, and, further, to result in a permanent blockade. For, if it were to be established for only a few months, the chance that the nations opposed to us would in the meantime be forced to give in would be very slender. According to sources of information of an absolutely reliable nature, England has for so long been preparing for the U-boat war, and has stocked herself to such an extent with foodstuffs and raw material, that even though the temporary cutting off of raw materials, munitions, and foodstuffs would be discommoding, the effect of the U-boat war would not be felt until a very considerable time had passed.

And in connection with all this, we must bear in mind that it is possible for all manner of unforeseen circumstances to occur in the course of a few months; that, in any event, the question of whether or not the United States would come into the war would be solved within this period of time and that England, buoyed up by this hope, would do her best to hold out. I can not too earnestly call your attention to the fact that the ruggedness and stubbornness of the English national character is not to be looked upon as existing only in hackneyed speech. Rather must it be admitted that there is no doubt that the English people, in spite of the occasional raising of certain voices for peace, has thoroughly recognized the seriousness of the situation and the significance of the arbitrament of war on the question of world power, involving thereby, in a certain sense, the very existence of England; that England is economically reorganized and rejuvenated, that she has brushed a number of earlier difficulties out of her way—I mention at present only the elimination of the restrictions of the labor unions—and that she has made up her mind definitely to hold out to the last. For this reason, there is absolutely nothing to be expected in the nature of a supposed moral effect, or of a supposed overawing of England. Important as is the matter of bluff in politics, an element of which we Germans often make too little use in the commercial field, we must constantly keep before us the fact that in the case now under discussion the only justification for the resumption of unrestricted U-boat warfare would be the possibility of an actual isolation of England for a period of from at least four to six months.

II

Conceding the impossibility of effectively carrying out a thorough blockade, we are faced with the following considerations in connection with the results which would be brought about by the resumption of the U-boat war.

So far as the United States is concerned, I can unhesitatingly announce my opinion that the loss of American lives as the result of torpedoing a ship without previous warning and without provisions being made for the safety of the passengers, would mean war with the United States. The possibility of carrying out an unrestricted U-boat war for any length of time without the loss of American lives, can not be seriously contemplated, in view of the course matters have taken up to the present time. There are isolated expressions of opinion to the effect that the American Government and, in any case, Wilson, if he remains at the helm, would shrink back from the final step of declaring war. In support of this view, they point to speeches of Wilson and also of Hughes, during the election campaign, in which both announced as one of their principal aims the keeping of the United States out of the war. I believe that this view is erroneous. It is perfectly true that the inclination of the great mass of the American people is to keep out of the war, to enjoy in peace the benefits of the unparalleled wave of prosperity, and not to bother about the war, or in fact about the question of foreign politics at all. This was shown in its time in the course of the well-known conflict between the President and Congress over the *Sussex* case. Such a mental attitude, however, would only be maintained in the absence of the loss of American lives on the occasion of such attacks, under circumstances which could not be justified according to the American view. In such a case as this, I very much doubt whether even a President whose inclinations are all against war would be able to influence a public opinion which has become unanimously opposed to the U-boat war, and whose attitude is in the nature of a condemnation of the U-boat war. The slogan "Loss of American lives" would, together with the influence of the press, which is active in the cause of the British, give rise to such a storm of sentimental excitement on the part of the almost hysterically inclined, sentimental American people, that the result would be a well defined hostile attitude towards Germany.

But in all probability there would not be any question of opposition on the part of the President. For, although it is quite possible that, in case Wilson were reelected, it would be his wish to go down in history as a peace president and one who had brought about undreamed-of prosperity in peace, his political activities up to this time are proof that he has never taken the lead or guided public opinion, but that he has always followed it. Moreover, he has also bound himself by what he has stated in his notes, and this announcement of principles was most emphatically reasserted in the course of the election campaign.

It is out of the question that Hughes, in case he should be elected, should take a different stand after the 4th of March. The influential leaders of the Republican Party, and Roosevelt above all others, have before and during the election campaign attacked the weakness of the Democratic government on the U-boat question so emphatically, and have so solidly held it up as the storm center of all the election "issues," that the outcome of their efforts would not be open to doubt. It is true that Hughes has the reputation of being a man of unusually self-reliant character. There is no cause to fear that he would allow himself to be influenced by Roosevelt or by Root, who is anti-German and who would probably be appointed Secretary of State, or by anybody else. He will proceed along his own way. But it is just on account of this independence and self-reliance that there should be attributed to his assertions made during the election campaign a deeper significance than to such announcements as those of irresponsible candidates for the presidency are wont to be. In view of the fact that he has spoken so clearly against the U-boat war in the course of the campaign, he can not be expected to recede from this attitude, even when occupying the responsible position of president.

It is of course admitted that if Wilson is defeated in the campaign tomorrow, the 7th of November, he will have little inclination to determine a question of such enormous importance. It is much more likely that he will apply or discover every reason, however conventional, immaterial or devoid of all importance it may be, in order to hand over the decision to his successor and thereby lay all the responsibility on his shoulders. But at the very best, this would simply mean that the decision would be put off for a short time only.

III

The results of a war ¹ between the United States and Germany are serious beyond expression. I used to be of the opinion that the United States was already accomplishing all it could in the way of helping the Allies out, that the cold-blooded business sense of the Americans would prevent them from providing the Allies, who were already in a weak financial position, with further large sums in case of a war, and that for this reason the entrance of the United States into the war would have no particular significance so far as Germany was concerned. As matters have developed, I must recede from this opinion. As soon as it is determined to go to war with Germany, all differences of opinion will vanish in a moment. All parties will back up the President unanimously. The entire people would be carried along on a tidal wave of, I might almost say, hysterical patriotism. The German-Americans would be the first who would assure the Government of their absolute loyalty.

¹ The consideration that the breaking-off of diplomatic relations would not necessarily mean war would only hold if we were justified in assuming that, after the rupture of such relations, no American citizen would lose his life.

It is perfectly true that a direct participation by the United States in military operations could hardly be expected. At the same time, the possibility of even this should not be underestimated. In case Japan were, in agreement with England, to give the required guarantees, we might well have to reckon upon the possibility of having a certain percentage of the fleet, and particularly of the torpedo-boat destroyers, etc., made available to the patrol service directed against submarines. What would be more important, is that a great number of volunteers would enlist in the armies of the Allies. The fact that this did not occur in the case of Mexico was due to the circumstance that the Mexican situation under the Wilsonian policy was completely topsy-turvy and that as the result thereof there was no occasion for the patriotic spirit to burst into flame. In a war with Germany, the seriousness of which the nation would soon come to appreciate, we should, in my opinion, have to reckon upon a number of army corps consisting of American volunteers. It is asserted, even at this time, that there are about 28,000 Americans in the English and French armies. Since this information was announced by the *Times* and was not an item which could count in England's favor it is probably right. The great number of American air pilots in the French service, which has led to the establishment of a special American flying corps, is well known. A material reinforcement of this important branch of the army would at once take place.

But it is not so much the military as the economic side of the question which would bring the ultimate decision. The American Government would perceive at the very start, particularly if the Republican Party, whose abilities have been proven and whose experience in affairs of state are well known, were in power, that the main benefit in the American conduct of the war would not consist in the part they would play from a military standpoint, but in the energetic support they would give the Allies. The practical significance of this would be that the United States would take over the financing of the war. The government would call for great war loans, which would be met to overflowing as the result of patriotic inspiration, and it would thereby be placed in the position of putting still greater sums at the disposal of the Allies. How great these sums would be is beyond all calculation, on account of the enormous concentration of wealth during the last two years.

That the cold-blooded commercial instinct of the Americans would operate unfavorably against such a preparation of means and methods, is not true for two reasons. In the first place, it would not only be the banks and the business circles which would supply the money, but the entire people, including every rank of society, would participate in the loan as soon as an appeal to its patriotism was sounded. And moreover, even from the cold-blooded business standpoint, the providing of such unusual resources would be absolutely justified. For in the course of the last two years, the United States has involved itself financially with the Allies to such an extraordinary

extent that, in its own interests, it would have to provide further means for guaranteeing existing obligations. It would make good once again the old proposition of the dependence of the creditor upon the debtor. And then, too, the experience of the war, and particularly the policy of England, have proved to what an extent it is possible to make use of financial advances to establish new business obligations, to guarantee existing ones, and to obtain definite commercial advantages. By chance, a friend afforded me the opportunity of reading the private correspondence of one of the more important American officials. In this way I learned that England's policy in France and Russia, England's control of commercial proceedings, and her ruthless exploitation of her position as financier of the war, are all well known to the Americans. Moreover, the Allies have, over and above the neutral paper that they hold, sufficient collateral which they could offer as security. In case of need, they would probably not hesitate to mortgage the railroads and government lands, or to hold out promises of great properties to be used as security in case they are victorious (Belgian and Polish railroads). This is particularly true in the case of Russia, in the economic development of which the Americans have lately taken a deep, almost humorous interest.

The question of financing would continue to become more and more vital for the Allies. According to all sources of information, Russia stands face to face with bankruptcy. Lately it has repeatedly stopped its payments here, which heretofore have only been temporarily postponed. Very lately, the appeals of the Russian consuls to Russian subjects and the friends of Russia for financial assistance, have attracted notice. France has shown what a weak position her finances are in by the conditions under which it carried on the last loan operations. Davison, one of the partners of the firm of J. P. Morgan & Company, has, since his return a short while ago, initiated propaganda for England, the gist of which is that the American banks should refrain from requiring collateral, presumably because England was absolutely safe for the purposes of unsecured credit—a very transparent maneuver. In a word, our opponents are under a very severe financial strain, which is making itself felt in ever-increasing degree. It is, therefore, only too obvious why England's policy has for so long been systematically directed toward drawing the United States into the war by the use of every means at her disposal. This is made very evident over here by the English propaganda activities. And in this, England is backed by the powerful and direct influence of the American banks aside from the question of sympathy on the part of the people. If their financial difficulties were removed, the only reason for a speedy termination of the war which could appeal to our opponents would disappear; and in this connection I may say that in spite of all their defeats they can hold out just as long as we can, if not longer.

The indirect result of making all these resources available, moreover, would be an increase in war deliveries. There was a time when the American

war deliveries were incapable of further increase, and even now we must naturally not overlook the fact that the shrinkage in tonnage resulting from a U-boat war involving torpedoing without warning would always constitute a very considerable obstacle. On the other hand, we should not forget that for a considerable period of time the American shipyards have been crowded with orders and that right now the first deliveries are taking place which will naturally increase in volume. Then, too, the increased demand would, even in the face of an unprecedented rise in freight rates, necessitate the withdrawal of the last available ship from traffic with neutrals. Again, the tonnage of the transport ships of the American navy, of which it is possible to make good use, is not at all inconsiderable.

The capacity of production on the part of American industries is undoubtedly capable of being increased. I can no longer adhere to my former assumption that a declaration of war would lead to the stopping of shipments of ammunition to the Allies, or at least to a diminution thereof, because the American Government would need the munitions of war for its own army and navy. Indeed, if the American Government realizes that it is not a question of itself undertaking military operations, it will in its own interests endeavor to take a hand in the war in a most efficient way, which is by helping out the Allies, and for this reason it will not increase, or in any event increase but little, the deliveries for its own army and navy, but concentrate its efforts on increasing the deliveries to the Allies. Under the influence of appeals to patriotism, a number of factories which up to the present time have refrained, as a matter of principle or in their own interests, from deliveries of ammunition, etc.—I shall mention here only the monster plant of Ford—will be devoted unstintingly to this production. I shall refrain from discussing the reaction which a war between Germany and the United States would have upon the neutral countries of Europe, i.e., the Scandinavian countries, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, and Greece. In my opinion, these countries would not be able to withstand the pressure already exerted upon them by our opponents if they were faced with the entrance of the United States into the war and the indignation of public opinion in the countries in question on account of the U-boat war.

Particularly marked would be the psychological reaction upon Germany's enemies. If the stubbornness and endurance of the British constitute even now a material factor in the prolongation of the war, it is certainly not easy to see how England, France, and Russia too, could be dissuaded from continuing further with the war, from devoting their last efforts, and from making new and desperate endeavors, when they realized that the United States was behind them. The result would be that, even if we hold with unquenchable optimism to the idea of a final German victory, the end of the war would be postponed to some indeterminate time in the future.

Accordingly, I should look upon the resumption of an unrestricted U-boat

war as a national misfortune which could in its last analysis lead to Germany's defeat.¹

IV

On the other hand, if we are able to avoid a conflict with the United States, our chances even from the standpoint of German-American relations are not unfavorable. The salient point is that for a considerable length of time, Germany should be kept out of the American press, and that those factors which speak for us and against our opponents be put into operation. As soon as Germany desists once for all from playing the part of a disquieting element in the public opinion on this side—and to this end it would be most desirable that, for the future, the dispatching of U-boats to the American coast, even if they were to limit their activities to the restrictions of what is recognized by the United States as existing international law, be discontinued—the American people would little by little, I might say automatically, become conscious of the English yoke, as if we were to remove from the scale one of the two weights which are counterbalancing each other, to wit, the German U-boat war and the English commerce war.² In this connection, the prospects, even if Wilson is reelected, in spite of his disinclination to do anything energetic, would not be poor, whereas I should confidently expect direct measures against the English commercial policy to be taken by the Republican Party even though it is essentially more anti-German than the Democratic Party, particularly in view of everything that I have heard about Hughes' character. The end and aim of the German policy would consist in bringing to the realization of the American people the commercial oppression and overpowering of the United States by England, and above all the inefficiency of the English blockade. This would mean, in practical terms, commercial U-boats and still more commercial U-boats. So the program would be not

¹ I must, however and in any event, announce in the form of a reservation that I have not been able to picture the reaction of the U-boat war against merchant ships upon the fleets of both sides. I could readily understand that the U-boat war would be considered in naval circles as a means of enticing the English battle fleet to come out into the open in order to destroy it. But I ask myself first whether the British would not, in spite of all, hold back their battle fleet as they have constantly done up to this time and prefer to watch the destruction of their merchant tonnage in the hope that there would be an early cessation of the activities of the U-boats, as in earlier cases; and, secondly, whether the German battle fleet, in spite of its undeniable superiority from a technical standpoint, is so superior to the English fleet in discipline, heroism of the personnel, and in the matter of the mutual co-operation of all its parts, as to be really in a position to deliver an absolutely fatal blow. The battle of Skagerrak supports the affirmative, and the presumably extraordinary and systematic increase of the British battle fleet since the beginning of the war speaks in the negative on this point.

² Together with the above, other elements along the same line would be effective. The stringency of the world's wheat market is so disquieting, prices will leap here in the United States to such an extent, and within a determinate period, as a result of England's purchases—\$1.85 already at the present time, instead of the normal rate of \$1.00 a bushel—that it is quite possible that we may and must calculate upon an embargo. This would have the same effect that we are trying to bring about by the use of the U-boats: adding obstacles to the provisioning of England.

only to build war U-boats but commercial U-boats as well; not only to win by military measures but to get the upper hand in a war of commerce.

This is possible only by acting indirectly and by means of the United States. Whether this purpose can be accomplished is a question. In any event, a serious attempt should be made. England will no longer be in a position to announce the effectiveness of a blockade if every month two or four, or at a later period still more, merchant U-boats arrive here. The occasional loss of a merchant U-boat would, particularly if the loss had occurred through the action of British war-ships, only tend to strengthen the sympathy for Germany. At the same time, a regular merchant U-boat commerce would restore the factor which is of the greatest weight in German-American relations and has been eliminated, so far as we are concerned, up to the present time, namely, that we would again resume big business with the Americans. In this case, it would in my opinion be an easy matter to put through a loan on the basis of actual purchases helped along by the current of improving relations between the United States and Germany. I am perfectly certain that I would be able to obtain a loan even to the German Government, if it could be supported by the probability of regular series of purchases by Germany of a major sort covering all fields, and particularly in the field of foodstuffs, fats, etc.; whereas up to this time these attempts for a loan have been made under the disadvantage that Germany's character as a customer had ceased to exist during the war and that the attempt to initiate purely financial transactions had, in view of the effects of the U-boat war, always broken time and again on the rock of public opinion in this country.

V

If, in spite of all this, it should be decided for reasons utterly unknown here to resume the unrestricted U-boat warfare, the tactical question which remains is how to stage events with regard to the United States and other neutral Powers.

In my opinion, we should refrain from any announcement of blockade. The announcement of a blockade by means of U-boats would result in immediate action on the part of the American Government. America would point to the fact that, according to the teachings of experience up to the present time, a blockade could not be effectively maintained by means of U-boats, and, under the influence of aroused sentiment based upon possible losses of human life, would look upon the declaration of a blockade at once as a hostile act and, by means of a counter-declaration, would take a definite stand against the U-boat war. Even the English, although so far as they were concerned the question of the loss of human life was non-existent, did not have the courage to publicly declare their blockade at the time, but at first simply adopted the present rules, and did not until months had passed characterize their action as a blockade. Acting along the same lines, it

would be advisable simply to carry on the U-boat war without any exchange of notes and in the most ruthless form, in order to provide a chance of perhaps proving that all theories with regard to the attitude of the United States are mistaken, that it would little by little accustom itself to existing circumstances, and that good fortune would result in no American lives being lost for a considerable length of time. Improbable as is the likelihood that results of this kind would follow, this policy would at least have the benefit of the experience of the English policy. On the other hand, that the declaration of a blockade and notification of the same to other neutral countries would be of any practical significance, I doubt. Even the smaller neutral countries would hardly allow themselves to be influenced in affairs pertaining to their sea-going commerce through the announcement of a blockade.

The only official announcement on the part of the German Government addressed to the United States which, in a given case, I could imagine as either useful or possible, would be a note in which Germany should point out that it had, in deference to the wishes of the United States, refrained from carrying out a ruthless U-boat war as a retaliation against the English war on commerce and the English blockade, and that Germany has accepted as authoritative the announcement made in the notes of the Government of the United States that America would insist upon the observance of international law in every respect on the part of every nation belonging to the belligerent group; that Germany is inquiring as to what had been done for the purpose of doing away with the blockade which the United States itself had designated as being unlawful; that the distinction between human lives and property can not be conclusive, since the governing point of view is not national, but must be international, and that from this standpoint "bread to the Americans is property, to the Germans, life; ammunition to the Americans is property, to the Germans, death." If such a note were considered proper, then it would be useful to consult the German Ambassador in Washington, whose policy in this question has shown itself to be entirely correct from beginning to end, with regard to the best time for sending such a note.

NEW YORK, *November 6, 1916.*

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Extract from a personal letter from Second Embassy Counsel Prince Hatzfeldt to Ambassador v. Tschirschky

Rec. Berlin, December 22, 1916.

WASHINGTON, *November 9, 1916.*

. . . It is above all things essential to rid ourselves of the delusion that we shall be able to win through the launching of the so-called ruthless U-boat

war. For in England, food reserves exist which must first be consumed before the cutting off of imports will have any effect at all. In Germany, it was a year and a half before we became pinched. And in this connection, we shall never be able to cut off the road from Calais to Dover. As soon as Americans are killed without warning, we shall have war with America, which has at least one advantage, and that is that we shall probably go home. But America would be of such vast assistance to the Allies as not to justify underestimating it, and a war entered into on behalf of murdered innocent Americans, as they call it here, would be unquestionably popular. The stand taken by both candidates for the presidency in their campaign speeches is such that they can not avoid declaring war. For after the breaking off of diplomatic relations, this would only be avoidable if we were to cease the U-boat war at once. But there will be no purpose in doing this. If we believe that we are no longer able to continue the war, for military or commercial reasons, we should make peace at once. We shall get better conditions now than if we had more enemies. For, in my opinion, Scandinavia and Holland would be automatically forced to proceed against us upon the entrance of the United States into the war. If they do not, they will simply receive no foodstuffs, and we certainly can not furnish them. But if we can content ourselves not to talk about the U-boat war for four months, and if the commanding officers obey our orders, this means that there will be a collision between the United States and England; not that it would come to the point of war, but that the Americans will insist upon their rights to remain in touch with us. And this means that we will then be materially assisted. The bitterness here against England is already very great. The fact that the English have cut off the whole of Hearst's news service has resulted in our getting him for an ally, whom we can not afford to underestimate.

His service includes twelve hundred newspapers all over the country, and amongst these the two with the greatest circulation are in New York. Here we are continually and not unjustly confronted with the reproach that the quarrel with Germany involves American lives and that the difference with England is simply based on injury to commerce. The scarcity in cargo space which now exists is due only to the very smallest extent to the activity of our U-boats; it is mainly due to requisitions made by the British Government and to the very long time which a ship consumes on each journey for one reason or another. But we must not forget that particularly here in the United States, and as well as in neutral lands, a gigantic amount of tonnage is in course of construction which will soon be placed in service. In view of the present freight rates, the costs of construction are negligible. I am writing to you in detail in this way because I believe we have fallen so far in love with the U-boats at home that there are a great many points which we have overlooked. If we were to use the greater part of our U-boats for

commercial purposes, I believe that we should get far better results. One or two will not be enough, and there is plenty of valuable freight to be had. I am thinking of fats.

The establishment of a Polish kingdom has made absolutely no impression over here. Most of the papers over here say that we are cutting up the bear's pelt before we have caught him. Of course, the German and Jewish papers are an exception. At the same time, I believe that this is the proper moment to come out with it. It certainly is lucky that the Austrians are sending an Ambassador over here. It is to be hoped that Tarnowsky will come very shortly. . . .

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Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 20, 1916.

Telegram No. 1103-A.

To be delivered to the Imperial

Chancellor and to the Secretary of State.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
December 20, 1916.

General Ludendorff telegraphs as follows:

Since Lloyd George has rejected our peace proposal in his speech in the lower house, I am of the opinion that, as the result of the impressions I have received on the western front, the U-boat war should now be launched with the greatest vigor.

LERSNER.

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Secretary of State Zimmermann to Secretary of Legation v. Lersner

Telegram No. 1612.

Answer to telegram No. 1103-A.

BERLIN, December 21, 1916.

For your Excellency's personal information:

For the present, a steady pulse and a cool head are required before all else in order not to interfere with the political results of our peace move.

For General Ludendorff:

We must at present await the formal answer of our opponents to our peace proposal. Then we shall take up the question of the armed merchant vessels for which a note is being prepared according to agreement. This view is also shared by His Majesty the Emperor.

At the present time, there exist serious objections against an unrestricted

U-boat war, not only on account of the United States but also on account of European neutrals.

ZIMMERMANN.

Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 22, 1916.

Telegram No. 1114-A.

Answer to telegram No. 1612.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
December 22, 1916.

I have delivered your Excellency's telegram to General Ludendorff, accompanying the delivery with a few remarks based upon the contents of the first paragraph which applied to me. The General declared that it was indeed far from his intention to urge the Imperial Government to undertake unrestricted U-boat war at the present time, and before the determination of our peace move. He must, however, once more state as his view that without launching a ruthless U-boat war we would lose the campaign. His impressions of the western front had strengthened him in this view. The sinking of armed merchant steamers would not suffice.

That the Imperial Chancellor had agreed in September at Pless that the Supreme High Command should decide the time at which the beginning of the unrestricted U-boat war should take place; that this time would come at the end of January; that the Field Marshal would no longer be able to shoulder the responsibility of the campaign in case the government should not agree to this.

When the General stopped speaking, I asked him what he meant by the term unrestricted U-boat war. He wants to subject England to an absolute blockade; every ship, even passenger boats, which approach England shall be sunk.

I asked the General if he did not fear the entrance of the neutral Powers into the war; for that was practically what his request meant. He said that the Field Marshal would have sufficient troops advanced against Holland and Denmark so that the latter would not attack. That the neutrals should be allowed to use a certain track past the north of England for the purpose of trade with other neutrals.

I referred to the United States, which without a doubt *must answer* with a declaration of war. General Ludendorff declared that America sooner or later would go against us. I expressed the opinion that there were other views which were opposed to his view, and above all the Imperial Government really was vested with the duty of sparing our people and our Army a war with the United States.

After quite a lengthy debate, it seemed that the General would be willing

to permit the passage of liners to England. In any event he would certainly demand that they carry no absolute contraband.

Thereupon I went to see Colonel v. Bartenwerffer, who will prepare the answer to your Excellency. I pointed out to him the tremendous responsibility which the Supreme High Command of the Army was taking upon itself with regard to the Emperor, the people and the Army, by this precipitate insistence. Now more than ever did it devolve upon us to consider further decisions that might be made coolly and dispassionately. The Colonel agreed to this.

LERSNER.

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Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 23, 1916.

Telegram No. 1121-A.

To be delivered personally.

Only for the Imperial Chancellor
and the Secretary of State.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
December 23, 1916.

General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg wires as follows:

In connection with the exchange of telegrams of General Ludendorff with Secretary of State Zimmermann with regard to the U-boat war, I herewith inform your Excellency that my opinion is that, in view of the military situation, we should lose no time in putting into effect the policy agreed upon of torpedoing armed enemy merchant ships.

The Entente is proceeding with the war with all the means at its disposal. There is no doubt of this, in view of the fact that we have been so roughly repulsed by every parliament. Even Wilson's efforts can accomplish nothing unless our opponents are willing to give themselves the lie. I believe that Wilson's proposal was evoked by England. In my opinion, we are not able, for national reasons and in view of our strong military position, to go into the question at present. It would, therefore, be a dangerous omission, one not to be justified from a military standpoint, if we were to allow ourselves to be held off in any way. The Army confronting the enemy would feel this in the same way. Officers and soldiers expect the ruthless application of all arms.

We can not afford to overlook the morale of the Army, if its fighting spirit is not to be taken away.

I therefore ask your Excellency to permit yourself, in the course of carrying out the requisite diplomatic steps, to be guided by these considerations.

England will not be overthrown by the mere fact of torpedoing armed enemy merchant ships. More severe measures must be adopted in order to break England's will.

On the occasion of the conference in Pless at the end of August, your Excellency made the decision on the question of launching of an

unrestricted U-boat war depend upon my statement of opinion that from the military standpoint the time had come. This moment will be the end of January. Our victory in Roumania will by then have reached its full effect. On the other hand, we should not allow our opponents any considerable time in which to complete undisturbed their preparations for the decisive battle on land.

In this connection, Holland, Denmark and the Scandinavian States should be permitted to travel a defined course around the north of England unmolested. Whether America is entitled to certain considerations, must be made a matter of proof. The efficiency of the U-boat war must not be permitted to be interfered with to any definite extent by reason of this. I emphatically reserve my position with regard to this matter. Diplomatic and military preparations for launching the unrestricted U-boat war should be initiated at the present time in order that it can certainly be launched by the end of January.

LERSNER.

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Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Secretary of Legation v. Lersner

Telegram No. 1628.

Answer to telegrams Nos. 1114-A

and 1121-A.

For General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg. BERLIN, *December 23, 1916.*

I should like first of all to call your Excellency's attention to my communication of October 6 of this year, in connection with your statement that, on the occasion of the conference in Pless at the end of August, I had made the decision with regard to the unrestricted U-boat warfare dependent upon your Excellency's announcement that you considered the time ripe, basing your conclusion on the military situation. In defining my position with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war in my letter of October 6, I said that, since it was not only being launched against enemy ships, but against neutral ships as well, it affected directly our relations with the neutral States, and to this extent constituted an expression of foreign policy for which I have to bear the sole responsibility, a responsibility which is constitutional and can not be delegated, although, in forming my opinion at the proper time, your Excellency's opinion would, needless to say, be entitled to a wholly unusual consideration.

With this premise, I should like to emphasize the fact that I agree with your Excellency in the view that the question of torpedoing armed enemy merchant ships must be immediately presented to the United States in the clearest possible light. The earliest moment at which the note, which is already prepared here, can be handed over to the American Ambassador, will be the time of the receipt of the formal answer of our opponents to our

peace proposal. How it will come out, nobody can tell at this time. The probability is that while its general tone will be one of rejection, nevertheless some small door will be left open. We must not close this door. This would occur if we should initiate our policy with regard to armed merchant ships before the receipt of the reply note. This would have very detrimental effects upon the political situation which we have brought about by our peace proposal, as well as after-effects upon the peace spirit in the countries of our enemies. Even now we are facing the assumption reached in enemy countries as well as in neutral States, that we have engineered the whole peace move in bad faith and merely as a last step before starting in with the unrestricted U-boat war. Certainly no arguments need be adduced to show that we should avoid strengthening this impression. Unfortunately, a number of German newspapers have made it an easy matter for our opponents to arrive at this misinterpretation of our action, in that they answered Lloyd George's speech and Wilson's note by immediately calling for the U-boats. These articles will also have a further ill effect in case we should, as matters develop, proceed to a ruthless U-boat war. We are most deeply interested in not having the outside world informed ahead of time concerning our possible arrival at this stage, and I have sent out very definite instructions to the press on the point. And I also consider it essential that the Supreme High Command of the Army shall likewise insist upon it with the utmost severity, that such discussions shall not appear in the press, and for this reason I beg to request your Excellency to issue the necessary instructions at the earliest possible moment.

Concerning the question of the unrestricted U-boat warfare, the stand which I have maintained up to the present time is that such a step can only be discussed if our military situation is such as to permit us to rely with certainty upon the fact that the European neutrals can be prevented from taking up arms against us. Your Excellency is of the opinion that this time will have come by the end of January, 1917. I therefore venture to assume that your Excellency will be in a position at that time to concentrate the necessary troops at both the Dutch and the Danish frontiers. On this condition, and to the extent that I may find myself able to agree with your Excellency that the advantages of an absolutely ruthless U-boat war are greater than the disadvantages resulting from the United States joining our enemies, I shall be ready to consider the question even of an unrestricted U-boat warfare. There are no objections for preparing for conferences with the Supreme High Command of the Army and the Chief of the Admiralty Staff as soon as our peace move has been brought to a definite conclusion as the result of the answer which the Entente will make.

I shall, of course, give full weight to what your Excellency stated with regard to the morale of the army, in connection with the diplomatic handling of the entire question.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 26, 1916.

Telegram No. 1134-A.

Answer to telegram No. 1628.

For Imperial Chancellor and
Secretary of State only.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
December 26, 1916.

Field Marshal v. Hindenburg telegraphs as follows:

I have received with regret your Excellency's telegram No. 1628 of the twenty-fourth instant. I must express myself frankly on this subject, and your Excellency will agree upon the point that there must be complete understanding between the Imperial Chancellor and the Supreme High Command of the Army.

In my telegram, I had laid weight upon the necessity of early and energetic operations by sea, since to me they are the only means whereby we shall be enabled to bring the war to an end promptly. Your Excellency believes that you are not able as yet to support this course. However, our military situation is such as not to permit negotiations of any kind to divert from their course military measures which have finally become recognized as correct, and thereby to cripple the energetic conduct of the war. I must sustain this view under all conditions, and must therefore renew my request to allow the U-boat war against armed merchant ships to begin without previous negotiations, and to enter immediately into arrangements for the ruthless conduct of the U-boat war.

Your Excellency desires that effective measures be taken with the press.

General Ludendorff, moved by similar considerations as those to which your Excellency refers, had taken up the question of a conference on this very subject in Berlin. On this occasion, your Excellency's subordinates, so far as I am able to judge, failed to take into due account your Excellency's efforts. General Ludendorff, moreover, proposed the establishment of a press bureau in connection with the Imperial Chancelry, for a centralized management of the press, since this management had been lacking on many occasions. So that your Excellency can plainly see to what extent the Supreme High Command has gone for the purpose of securing centralization within the meaning of your Excellency's request.

The greater part of the German people, as the result of erroneously interpreting your Excellency's words addressed to the Reichstag committee in the middle of September, holds the Supreme High Command of the Army alone responsible for the decision of the question as to whether the ruthless U-boat war shall be carried on or not. This is not just. As long as your Excellency and the Supreme High Command of the Army were in agreement, I could overlook this. But since our points of view appear to be markedly divergent, I shall be obliged to announce, in defense of the attitude of the Supreme High Command of the Army, that your Excellency claims, it is true, the final responsibility as Imperial Chancellor, but that I shall, very naturally, to the

extent of my power and with the feeling of complete responsibility for the successful outcome of the war, insist that those military measures be taken which I consider appropriate for that purpose.

LERSNER.

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Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Secretary of Legation v. Lersner

Telegram No. 1639.

Answer to telegram No. 1134-A.

For General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg.

BERLIN, December 26, 1916.

I acknowledge receipt of your Excellency's telegram of the twenty-sixth instant. Your Excellency proceeds therein upon the assumption that it is my purpose to have the U-boat war against armed merchant ships depend upon negotiations with the United States. This assumption is incorrect. I desire no negotiations with the United States about this question; on the contrary, in the note to the American Government which has already been prepared, it is emphatically stated that from now on armed enemy merchant ships will be considered by us to be belligerent craft, and consequently will be torpedoed without warning. I shall bring the note to Pless and venture to look forward to a personal interview with your Excellency as well on matters covered by this note as on other questions which your Excellency has raised.

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

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Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 8, 1917.

Telegram No. 31.

For the Imperial Chancellor and
the Secretary of State only.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
January 8, 1917.

Referring to our telegram No. 1121-A, General Field Marshal telegraphs as follows:

I have the honor to inform your Excellency that, in connection with my telegram of the 23d of December, the military situation is such that unrestricted U-boat warfare can begin on the 1st of February and for that very reason should begin.

GRÜNAU.

*Under-Secretary of State of the Imperial Chancelry Wahnschaffe to Imperial
Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg*

(General Headquarters)

Telegram.

BERLIN, *January 9, 1917.*

Secretary of State Helfferich telegraphs your Excellency as follows:

1. The gist of the new memorial submitted by the Admiralty Staff is the comparison of the effects of an unrestricted U-boat warfare upon the shipping which is now operating with England with the effect of the present U-boat war upon commerce. (Number 5 of the attached document of the 22d of December.) It is stated that a ruthless U-boat war would diminish British sea commerce by about 39 per cent in the course of five months, whereas the U-boat war on commerce, on the contrary, would reduce it only to the extent of 18 per cent; that the diminution of 39 per cent would be sufficient to make England's situation unbearable, whereas the loss of 18 per cent would not be such as to force England to sue for peace. The calculation of the 39 and 18 per cent is based on the following reasoning:

It is assumed that the ruthless U-boat war would result in a monthly loss of 600,000 tons, whereas the war on commerce would bring about a loss of 400,000 tons. The effect of the unrestricted U-boat war would be heightened by the frightening away from England of two fifths of the neutral tonnage now available, whereas the continuation of the U-boat war on commerce would not result in the frightening away of any enemy tonnage.

I beg to call attention to the fact that the loss of a certain amount of neutral tonnage on account of intimidation has already come to pass as the result of even a U-boat war carried on according to the rules governing cruisers. The memorial of the Admiralty Staff calls impressively to our attention, on pages 22 and 23, the temporary stagnation of trade between Holland and Great Britain and the stoppage of the trade between Norway and the Murman coast. A vigorous continuation of the U-boat war on commerce will doubtless go far to bring about the tying-up of neutral tonnage or at least its discontinuance on English trade routes, even if the intimidating effect of an unrestricted U-boat war would not be equalled. At any rate the difference between 39 and 18 per cent would decrease.

On the other hand, the following point of view should, in my opinion, be thoroughly tested: If the effect of the unrestricted U-boat war is to bring seafaring neutrals into the war on the side of England, the intimidating effect of the U-boat war would at least be eliminated to a very definite extent. In such case, the voyage to England would no longer mean a mere act of commerce for the neutrals in question, to be undertaken or avoided after weighing the advantages and disadvantages, but a war move in connection with which resulting losses and deaths would play no particular part. Of course, we can not submit any proof of the amount of percentage in losses which England will be able to endure in her merchant trade before coming to the point where she can hold out no longer. For example, if the domestic food situation were

critical, it would require a shorter time and a less paralyzing grip upon her commerce to bring this about, than it would if the domestic food situation were favorable.

2. The estimates of the Admiralty Staff with regard to England's present supply of foodstuffs, and the possibilities of future imports, are moderate. In my opinion, they are rather favorable than unfavorable to England.

In my opinion, England at the present time has only enough wheat on hand to last from eleven to twelve weeks, whereas the memorial of the Admiralty Staff counts on a fifteen-week supply; and again, according to the estimate submitted by me to the budget committee at the end of September, 1916, England was at that time supplied with cereals for four and a half months, or in other words, for about nineteen weeks. The English stock on hand will steadily decrease through January and February on account of the difficulties of importation. England, and with England, France and Italy, are approaching a food crisis, to increase the dangers of which I know of but one effective method: the imposing of restrictions upon the consumption of the products of the great producing countries, especially the United States. The latter needs for its own consumption an amount which is given in the memorial of the Admiralty Staff, page 34, at 623 million bushels (about 17 million tons), according to Snow. The unrestricted U-boat war will, on the one hand, still further restrict imports which, as it is, are already very greatly reduced—more so than the limited U-boat war on commerce.

On the other hand, in the process of weighing advantages and disadvantages, a point which up to the present time has been neglected should not be overlooked. If the unrestricted U-boat war results in the entrance of the United States into the war, America will be just as much interested in England's being victorious as she would be in a cause exclusively her own. If it is true that England's defeat can only be avoided by providing her with a sufficient grain supply, then America must and can make sacrifices to this end to an extent which, in the capacity of a neutral State, it would not consider, that is, by the limitation of its own consumption of cereals in favor of England. This limitation will by no means necessarily bring about the imposition of a system of short rations applied to American bread consumption; the result would undoubtedly be reached by means of great purchases made by the government and, possibly, by means of forced purchases. Since the Union has more than twice as many inhabitants as England, every *per capita* restriction of the American population in the matter of grain consumption means more than a double gain *per capita* for the English population. If the outcome of the war were dependent thereon, I would not consider it at all impossible that the United States would be able to bring about a 10 per cent restriction on its normal consumption in favor of England, whereby 1.7 million tons (8.5 million quarters) would at once be released to meet an English shortage of three months. And if a half of this amount were to be sunk on the voyage to England—a percentage far outstripping the possibilities estimated by the Admiralty Staff—such a step would be of invaluable, or perhaps decisive, assistance to England.

Paradoxical as it sounds, it is not altogether impossible, therefore,

that, compared with the limited U-boat war on commerce, the unrestricted U-boat war would not in the last analysis, have a harmful effect upon the supplying of England with breadstuffs, but would rather operate in favor of such supply.

3. The considerations brought out in Nos. 1 and 2 show how important it is to the results sought by a U-boat war, to have the neutral Powers held off from participation. Whether this will be possible if ruthless methods are adopted in the U-boat war, we shall be able to judge better in the course of a few weeks, when the answer of the Entente to Wilson and its results are before us, than we are today.

There is no occasion for reaching precipitous decisions since, at the present, time is working for us and not against us in the matter of England's food supply. January and, particularly, February are, for obvious seasonal reasons, unfavorable months for importing cereal foodstuffs to England. During the years 1909-14 the average monthly imports amounted to 8,670,000 hundredweight; the January average only 7,050,000 hundredweight, the February average only 5,870,000 hundredweight, whereas the March average was 7,513,000 hundredweight and, again, the April average 9,251,000 hundredweight. This time, as I prophesied would be the case, basing my opinion on the crop situation, the falling off of the grain imports began as early as September. In spite of England's efforts and of the terrific prices which she paid, the amount of imports for the four weeks in December, 1916, has only reached 1,410,000 quarters, as against 1,955,000 quarters in the preceding year. All signs indicate that this situation will continue until March and April, when the Argentine and Australian crops will be able to arrive.

If, for the reasons above set out, we put off for a few weeks our decision with regard to launching the unrestricted U-boat war, then when our decision is made, the prospect of having the English grain supply decrease to a point materially lower than a twelve-week supply will be good. The lower the supply at the commencement of an unrestricted U-boat war, the more certain will our results be and the quicker will they be attained.

I have hastily set down the above in written form in the brief time available to me under the circumstances. I should, therefore, appreciate it if your Excellency would make use of these notes for your own personal information only, and would be good enough not to release them in written form. Helfferich.

WAHNSCHAFFE.

184

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 11, 1917.

Telegram No. 46.

For the Imperial Chancellor and
the Secretary of State only.PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
January 11, 1917.

General Ludendorff suggests that until the 1st of February our press should be held under strict check touching arrangements for the U-boat war. He believes that Reventlow and Rippler can be persuaded to keep still, either by the Navy or by the Supreme High Command, if they are personally and confidentially informed of our plans. Further, he suggests various small expedients for taking up the attention of the public; for instance, the announcement of U-boat successes in print, immediately after the Army reports.

I answered that measures would have to be handled in most intimate cooperation with your Excellency and have kept in mind the points communicated to me by your Excellency.

GRÜNAU.

MARGINAL NOTE BY THE IMPERIAL CHANCELOR

This certainly seems very questionable to me. Ludendorff is afraid to inform Vienna for fear of indiscretions, but on the other hand Reventlow and Rippler! They will under no circumstances hold their tongues. If we are to keep the press in check, this can always be done without taking it into our confidence. For the U-boat war is a military measure, the discussion of which can be just as easily checked as the arrangements for any other military operation.

B. H. 1/11.

185

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau

Telegram No. 63.

Re telegram No. 46.

BERLIN, January 11, 1917.

I agree fully in the stand taken by General Ludendorff and had already, yesterday, discussed the question from the same point of view with the Chief of the Admiralty Staff. The requisite measures will be taken in cooperation with Excellency v. Holtzendorff.

ZIMMERMANN.

186

Chief of the Admiralty Staff Admiral v. Holtzendorff to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. Berlin, January 11, 1917.

Absolutely confidential.

Copy.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *January 9, 1917.*

I order that the unrestricted submarine war be launched with the greatest vigor on the 1st of February. You will immediately take all the necessary steps, taking care, however, that this intention shall not prematurely come to the knowledge of the enemy and the neutral Powers. You will present to me the basic plans of operation.

Copy hereof to be transmitted to the Imperial Chancellor,

WILHELM I. R.

BERLIN, *January 10, 1917.*

I have the honor to respectfully transmit to your Excellency the copy hereto attached.

V. HOLTZENDORFF.

187

General Manager Ballin to Minister v. Lucius (Stockholm)

Rec. Berlin, January 17, 1917.

HAMBURG, *January 10, 1917.*

MY DEAR AND HONORED FRIEND:

I do not need to state to you how I regret that I have not been able to see you to speak to you during your leave of absence. I am anxious to visit you in Stockholm before long, and it is only the fear that not only fantastic rumors but such as would directly injure the interests of the Fatherland, would arise in connection with my visit to Scandinavia, which makes me still hesitate to carry out my wish.

The situation here is and remains clouded. The military successes in Roumania appear at the same time to justify the assumption that by means of the Kiev road we can bring Russia to the point of being very seriously menaced. But situations in Russia are such that we can scarcely take it for granted that the present government will have the moral courage to shake itself free from the embraces of the Entente. Again, the opinion is becoming more and more often voiced by those who know Russia well and who are worthy of credence, that the path to a Russian peace does not lie along the Kiev-Odessa road, but in a demonstration against St. Petersburg. The Austrian Ambassador in Berlin, Gottfried Hohenlohe, too, has expressed this

opinion in no uncertain terms—probably not, however, without instructions from his government.

So we have before us the very difficult problem of increasing our railroad resources to a tremendous extent at a time when all efforts are being exerted toward manufacturing ammunition.

Hindenburg will, I believe, succeed in getting a final disposition in the matter of the U-boat question within a very short time. This decision will be a leap in the dark. If the United States remains passive, the U-boat will constitute a very effective aid to military operations on land, and will take an active part in materially shortening the duration of the war. If the United States takes an active part in the war on the side of the Entente, this U-boat decision will prolong the war for years and will make its final outcome uncertain to the highest degree. For these reasons, I can well understand how the Chancellor has up to this time with the greatest consistency fought against this leap in the dark, and I find it in the highest degree commendable. But after all, it will, in the end, be the Supreme High Command of the Army which shall have to determine the question whether, in its opinion, the war can still be carried on for any considerable length of time against such odds.

I believe that I have already written you about the German war aims. I believe that the greatest war aim for us consists in separating Russia and England; for the alliance of these two Powers is quite against nature and for this reason should be easy to break up. A prohibitionist Russia undoubtedly constitutes the greatest kind of a menace so far as we are concerned, and we shall never be able to bank upon the permanent peace for which we are now striving unless we reach some kind of an understanding with Russia. Even if, in order to accomplish the result, we should find it necessary to take some of the gloss off the old *Nibelungen* faith and loyalty, we should certainly be able to submit to this in view of the vital necessity thereof in connection with Germany's future.

With best wishes, I remain, my dear and honored Friend,
Yours faithfully,

BALLIN.

Personal letter of Max Warburg to Privy Councilor v. Langwerth Simmern

Rec. Berlin, January 29, 1917.
Personal.

HAMBURG, January 26, 1917.

DEAR FRIEND:

I assume that you have already made a hundred drafts of a probable answer to the message of President Wilson, and I herewith send you the hundred

and first. I have just dictated the answer more or less as I picture it, and for the purpose of clearing up my own mind with regard to the contents of the Wilson message. And in this connection I must state that it is only the Vienna translation of the Wilson message which has been published in the newspapers which are before me, and that I am of the opinion that the translation is erroneous with regard to many and not unimportant passages. But even if we assume that the form is just as obnoxious in the original as in the translation, we shall still be obliged to concern ourselves in detail with the contents of the note taken as a whole.

According to my view, it is primarily, directed against the assertion announced in our note of December 26, 1916, that we were willing to conclude peace at once without the United States and the other neutral Powers, for the purpose of immediately thereafter opening negotiations which were to result in the assurance of the peace of the world. The President challenges this view in the sharpest terms. He makes no claim to take a hand in the establishment of individual peace conditions, but, on the contrary insists upon being heard with regard to the fundamental principles on which the peace conditions shall be moulded, so that their permanence can be guaranteed by all the States, including the neutral Powers. I do not hesitate to state that the formula "first peace, and then pacifism" seemed to me impracticable from the start, and that even now we can agree to Wilson's view that the coming peace must, in its fundamentals, harmonize with the pacifistic ideas of the future. We will not prejudice ourselves if we agree to this Wilsonian point of view, nor is there involved a direct surrender of our standpoint in our note of the 26th of December, 1916, but only a certain modification which does not need to trouble us much.

Quite independently of all this, when we commence the unrestricted U-boat warfare—and I still entertain the hope that we will drop this win-all-lose-all game—I am convinced that our best course would be not to immediately tear from Wilson's hands the thread which, in spite of our note of the 26th of December, 1916, wherein we gave him, after all, a pretty good kick, he still continues to attempt to spin. From all the information which we receive from America and the remaining neutral countries, it appears that there has been quite a distinct change in the public opinion in these countries in our favor, or, rather, against England. And under no circumstances do we want to let the opportunity slip which Wilson's pacifistic message gives us of letting ourselves be known as pacifists. This is the only way in which we can take the edge off the constant scream in the Entente press about Prussian militarism. Even if Wilson's message in very many ways challenges rebuttal, there would be absolutely no use, in my opinion, of pushing into the foreground those questions with regard to which we take a diametrically opposite position to his views, but that, on the contrary, it is absolutely to our present interest to emphasize all the points on which we agree

with him. If we constantly harp upon our agreements with him on those points in which we really are in agreement with him, and do so in the most effective manner possible, we shall make it very difficult for him, if not absolutely impossible, to take a position against us in the U-boat question. It seems to me that this is the most important result which we could hope to bring about by answering this note. We can afford to absolutely ignore the dangerous voices in our market-place.

The Bessermanns, Stresemanns, and others of that ilk are really of much less importance than the relations with America. If it comes to a war with America, we will so stimulate the moral, financial, and economic strength of our enemies that there will be nothing for us to hope for in the future. If we now accede to the note, it may be possible to keep the United States out of it.

It has also occurred to me that it might be well not to send the Senate any official note bearing on this message, but just a communication from Bernstorff to the President to the same effect; but I had to get rid of my bit of wisdom; *salvavi animam meam*, or in Low German: *Nu arger Du Di* (now get mad about it)!

With friendly personal regards,

Yours,

MAX M. WARBURG.

NUMBER 4

PART V.—LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL AND MEMORIAL OF THE CHIEF OF THE ADMIRALTY STAFF OF THE NAVY, OF DECEMBER 22, 1916, "WITH REGARD TO THE NE- CESSITY OF AN EARLY LAUNCHING OF THE UNRESTRICTED U-BOAT WAR"

189

*Chief of the Admiralty Staff Admiral v. Holtzendorff to Secretary of State
Zimmermann*

Rec. Berlin, January 7, 1917.
Strictly confidential.

BERLIN, January 6, 1917.

I have the honor to forward to your Excellency the attached copies of two documents addressed to the Chief of the General Staff of the Army.

V. HOLTZENDORFF.

190

*Chief of the Admiralty Staff Admiral v. Holtzendorff to Chief of the General
Staff General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg*

Strictly confidential.

BERLIN, December 22, 1916.

I have the honor to transmit most respectfully to your Excellency the attached statement of the necessity of an early launching of the unrestricted U-boat war. The document in question is, in the main, a continuation of the memorial of the 27th of August, 1916, which was entitled "The Cargo Space Question and England's Supply for the Year 1916," and which was sent to your Excellency (file No. 22247-I).

On the basis of the detailed statements in the draft in question, I will ask your Excellency to examine the reasoning which is followed, and hope that we shall reach a full agreement to the effect that it is absolutely necessary to adopt the severest measures possible against England's ocean commerce at the earliest practicable moment in order to make the best possible use of the advantages of the present situation and to assure ourselves an early victory.

I

It is necessary that the war be fought out to a definite decision before August, 1917, unless it is to result in the exhaustion of all the belligerents,

and hence in a termination which will be fatal for us. Our enemies Italy and France have received such a staggering blow, economically speaking, that it is only by the energy and force of England that they are still kept on their feet. If we can succeed in breaking the backbone of England's resistance, the war will immediately be terminated in our favor. But the backbone of England consists in the cargo space used for bringing to England those imports necessary for the maintenance of life, which assure her credit in foreign countries.

II

The stand taken with regard to cargo space, in the document of the 27th of August to which I have already referred, which subject was gone into in detail at that time, is again set out in the annexed enclosure. In brief it is this: Freight rates for the transportation of a great number of essential commodities have risen to an enormous extent, even being increased ten-fold or more. We know absolutely from numerous other sources that there is a general shortage in cargo space.

The English tonnage existing even at the present moment may be correctly assumed to be about 20 million tons gross. At least 8.6 million tons have been requisitioned for military purposes, and a half million is engaged in the coastwise trade, and according to estimates one million are under repairs, and therefore unavailable at the present time; some 2 million tons are designated for the use of the Allies, so that at the very most there are still 8 million tons of English shipping available for supplying England with foodstuffs. If we examine the statistics of the sea commerce in the British ports, the result is even less. In the months of July and September, 1916, according to these statistics, only about 6.75 million gross tons of English cargo space docked in England. In addition to this, there are about 900,000 tons of shipping engaged in commerce with England—enemy shipping, not British—and perhaps 3 million tons of neutral shipping. Altogether, then, England's food supply is taken care of by only some 10.75 million gross tonnage, roughly speaking.

III

If the work which we have done thus far in our war against cargo space is such as to hold out good prospects for further steps along this line, we may say that the abnormally poor results all over the world of this year's harvest of breadstuffs and provender has placed in our hands a very unique opportunity, of which no one will dare assume the responsibility of failing to take advantage.

Starting, apparently, as early as February, North America and Canada will be in a position of having practically no wheatstuffs at all to spare for the purposes of England. In this case, England must depend for its food

supply on Argentina, separated as it is from England by a long trip, and since Argentina, as the result of its poor harvest, will be able to deliver but little, India and particularly Australia must be England's sources of supply. It is shown in detail in the enclosure how the increased distance of the route to be traversed will result in an increasing demand upon our enemies for cargo space for grain to the extent of 720,000 tons. The practical result of this is that, of the available 10.75 million tons, 750,000 will be needed up to August, 1917, for a service which, up to this time, has not been required.

IV

Under conditions such as these, so favorable to us, an energetic blow delivered with all the strength at our command against English cargo space gives promise of an absolute certainty of success, so that I can only repeat and most pointedly emphasize my assertion of August 27, 1916, that "our obvious military task consists in the act of now bringing about a decision in our favor by the destruction of cargo space" and further, that "from the military standpoint there is no justification in refraining from the use, even at the present time, of the U-boat weapon." I do not hesitate to declare that as things stand at present, England will be forced to sue for peace within five months as the result of launching an unrestricted U-boat war. But this is true only in case ruthless U-boat warfare is carried on; it would not follow as the result of the limited U-boat war on commerce which is being carried on at this time, even if all armed vessels were to be considered as open to attack.

V

Proceeding on the basis of the monthly estimate already submitted of the computed destruction of 600,000 tons of cargo space by means of the unrestricted U-boat war, and on the basis of the expectation, more detailed figures in support of which are set out in the enclosure, that by means of such warfare at least two fifths of the neutral ocean commerce would be intimidated to the extent of not even setting sail for England, we may calculate that after the termination of five months English ocean trade will have fallen behind what it is today by some 39 per cent. England would not be able to put up with such a loss, whether considered with regard to its effects upon the situation which would develop after the war or with regard to the possibility of continuing further with the war at the present time. Today England is facing a situation as to foodstuffs which forces her, as a last resort, to attempt to put into operation those measures which we, in our position as a blockaded country, have had to adopt during the course of the war. The setting for an organization of this kind in England is entirely and fundamentally different from our own, and, as a matter of fact, unspeakably more unfavorable than is the case with us. The authority is lacking,

and the education of the people is such that they have not the discipline essential to meet such a pinch. And for another reason, too, it is no longer possible for the entire population of England to be put on the system of short rations in breadstuffs demanded by the situation. It was possible in Germany when we could substitute for the sudden bread shortage other temporary means of subsistence. This moment has gone by for England, and nothing can bring it back again. The supplying of England with the necessary foodstuffs can not be brought about by means of some three fifths of ocean transportation available without a corresponding powerful limitation upon the use of breadstuffs—and in this connection we must bear in mind the necessity of keeping the war industries going at the same time. The suggestion that England may already have in the country a sufficient amount of foodstuffs to tide over the crisis until the next harvest, is shown in the enclosure to be absolutely without merit.

Moreover, add the fact that the unrestricted U-boat war would at once mean a famine in fats for England, together with the cessation of the supply from Denmark and Holland, since a third of the entire importations of butter into England come from Denmark and all the imported butter-fats come from Holland. Further, it would mean an increased shortage of metals and woods as the result of the menace against the importations of metal and wood from Scandinavia going hand and hand with increased menace to shipment of metal from Spain. As a result, coal mining would decrease instantly, as the wood necessary for that purpose would no longer be available, and such would also be the case with iron and steel products and munitions dependant upon both of them. Finally, it would give us the opportunity so long desired to take effective steps against the importation of ammunition by neutrals, and to that extent to ease the burdens of the army.

In contrast with the above, a limited U-boat war on commerce, even in connection with the general release of armed steamers, would, after five months, have cut down the shipping engaged in the British trade by only five times 400,000 tons—about 18 per cent of the present monthly ocean trade, and thus less than 50 per cent of the results of the unrestricted U-boat warfare. Judging by past experiences, we can be by no means certain of the fact that the release of armed steamers would increase the cargo space sent to the bottom to any appreciable extent over the average of 400,000 tons reached in the last two months. It is probable that it will rather only counterbalance the loss otherwise to be expected by reason of increased arming. I am perfectly clear on the point that even the falling away of about one fifth of the present ocean commerce would have very disturbing results on the question of England's food supply. But I consider it impossible that England, now subject to the guidance of Lloyd George's policy of holding out to the very end, could be forced to sue for peace if the effects of

the shortage in fats, woods and metals above referred to, and the continued undermining of munition imports, should not be availed of. Add to this the cessation of the psychological effects of panic and fear. These effects, which can be brought about only as the result of ruthless U-boat warfare, constitute in my opinion an absolutely essential prerequisite of success. The experiences which were ours in the beginning of the U-boat war in the spring of 1915, when the British believed that it was being carried on in dead earnest, show the weighty importance of these effects, as do our experiences of the short U-boat war of March and April, 1916.

It is further necessary, as a prerequisite, that the unrestricted U-boat war should commence at the time that it is announced, and that no time be left for preparations, particularly between England and the neutral Powers. It is only in such case that great fear will be injected into the enemy and into neutrals as well.

VI

The announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war will bring the Government of the United States of America once more face to face with the question of whether or not it will maintain the same position regarding the question of the use of the U-boats which, judging from its attitude, it has maintained up to this time. I am positive in the opinion that war with the United States is so serious a question that all steps should be taken to avoid it. But in my opinion also the fear of such a break should not overawe us at the crucial moment to the extent of causing us to renounce the use of the weapon which promises us victory.

In any case, it is expedient for us to assume the solution more unfavorable to us and to clear up our own mind on the question of the effect which the entrance of the United States into the war would have on the result of the war, as far as our opponents are concerned. This effect could at best be practically negligible with regard to shipping space. It is not to be expected that more than an inconsiderable fraction of the tonnage belonging to the Central Powers now lying in American ports, and perhaps also other neutral ports, would at once be put in use for commerce with England. It would be quite possible to damage the greater part thereof so seriously that it would not be seaworthy in the critical period of the first few months. Arrangements have been made to bring this result about; moreover, it would be next to impossible to obtain crews for these ships. We may attribute an equal paucity of results in the case of American troops which, on account of absence of cargo space, would not be able to be brought over in any considerable numbers; and to American money, which can never take the place of transportation and shipping space. The only question to be considered is the attitude which America would assume towards the question of concluding peace—the peace for which England would be forced to sue.

We can not suppose that the United States would then determine to carry on the war against us single-handed, as it has no means at its disposal for taking definite steps against us, whereas its commerce would be damaged by our U-boats. On the other hand, it is to be expected that the United States would support the conclusion of such a peace, in order to resume normal commercial relations at the earliest possible moment.

I therefore reach the conclusion, that an unrestricted U-boat war so correctly timed as to bring about peace before the gathering of the harvest of the summer of 1917, that is to say, before August 1, will have to be at the cost of a break with the United States, for the reason that we are left no other choice. It follows that in spite of the danger of a break with America, an unrestricted U-boat war, promptly launched, is the proper means of winning the war. Moreover, it is the only means to this end.

VII

Ever since I announced in August, 1916, that the time had come for dealing a crushing blow to England, the situation has materially changed to our advantage. The falling off of crops all over the world, taken in connection with the effect of the war on England up to this time, affords us once more the opportunity of bringing about a decision in our favor before the new crops are gathered. If we fail to make use of this opportunity, which so far as can be foreseen, is our last, I can see no alternative than that of mutual exhaustion, without its being possible for us to terminate the war in such a way as to guarantee our future as a world Power.

In order to obtain the necessary results in time, the unrestricted U-boat war must commence by February 1 at the latest. I ask your Excellency to inform me as to whether the military situation on the Continent, particularly with regard to those Powers who still remain neutral, is such as to make this date convenient. I shall need three weeks time for the necessary preparations.

V. HOLTZENDORFF.

Enclosure.

Strictly confidential.

BERLIN, *December 22, 1916.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

I consider that the time has come to marshal the investigations and conclusions of the Admiralty Staff with regard to the questions incidental to the final decision as to the U-boat war and to make a full statement concerning the stand taken at this time, thus preparing a foundation upon which a final determination can be based. The situation is such that this decision can not be put off any longer. It is my conviction that it should be decided to launch a ruthless U-boat war, that is, a U-boat war in the course of

which every enemy and neutral ship found in the war zone is to be sunk without warning. In support of the correctness of my views on the subject, I refer to the following comments.

I

THE U-BOAT WAR FROM FEBRUARY UNTIL AUGUST, 1915

On February 4, 1915, the Admiralty Staff issued its announcement which designated the waters around Great Britain and Ireland as a war area, and threatened the destruction of every enemy merchant ship found therein, and also called specific attention to the dangers which neutral ships in the war area would run as a result of the misuse of neutral flags which had been ordered by the British Government, and of the chances of war upon the sea. The commencement of these measures was set for the 18th of February. The economic results of the U-boat war, which opened with all the forms of a systematic and military major operation, were carefully noted by the Admiralty Staff. The results of this observation are to be found in the memorial of the 21st of August, 1915, and in a more detailed and voluminous form in those of the 12th of February, 1916, which were transmitted to the various heads of the governmental departments.

In both cases, the Admiralty Staff, as a preliminary step towards the checking up of its official and departmental conclusions on these questions by means of expert advice on the subject, obtained the opinions of influential authorities on German economic life, particularly of persons well acquainted with the situation in England, who from beginning to end supported the propositions and conclusions of the memorials. Even today, these expert opinions have a very definite practical interest.

The gentlemen who were called upon to give their opinions in February, 1916, were:

Finance:

Imperial Councilor W. v. Fink, Head of the Banking House of Merk, Fink & Co., in Munich;

Chief Privy Councilor of Finance Waldemar Müller, President of the Board of Directors of the Dresden Bank in Berlin;

Dr. Arthur Salomonsohn, Business Manager of the Diskontogesellschaft in Berlin;

Max Schinkel, Business Manager of the Norddeutsche Bank in Hamburg, President of the Chamber of Commerce in Hamburg;

Privy Councilor of Commerce Zuckschwerdt, Head of the Banking House Zuckschwerdt & Beuchel, Member of the Prussian Herrenhaus, President of the Chamber of Commerce in Magdeburg.

Commerce:

Privy Councilor of Commerce Englehard, Member of the First Chamber of the Constitutional Estates of Baden, President of the Chamber of Commerce in Mannheim.

Industries:

Privy Government Architect Dr. of Engineering Beukenberg, Director General of the Phoenix Stock Company of Mines and Foundries in Hörde; Commercial Counselor Dr. of Engineering Reusch, Director General of the Good Hope Foundry in Oberhausen (Rhineland); Commercial Counselor Dr. of Engineering Springorum,¹ Director General of the Hoesch Iron & Steel Works Stock Company, Member of the Prussian Herrenhaus.

Agriculture:

v. Kries, Owner of the Manorial Estate at Kl. Wasmirsz near Dirschau; Privy Councilor of Agriculture Säuferlich, President of the Chamber of Agriculture of Anhalt, at Gröbzig; Councilor of Agriculture Schmidt, Member of the First Chamber of the Constitutional Estates of Württemberg, at Platzhof, near Öhringen.

At its inception, the U-boat war came into contact with an economic entity of high resisting power, which at that time had been injured very little by the general influences of the World War. It is true that the gap in many commercial relations caused by the war had not been without its effect, as many interruptions of many kinds, even in importation, were unavoidable; and on top of this came the poor harvest in Australia. But, on the whole, England was hardly affected; there was never any question of a shortage, and the increase in prices was endurable. England's transoceanic commerce had not been, up to then, seriously damaged, and uncomfortable as was the insistence with which the incidents of the war on commerce made themselves felt, on the whole the war had not resulted in such a radical effect as the lack of *points d'appui* overseas. Increase of freight rates was held within moderate limits, at least as compared with later developments.

The U-boat war changed the economic situation of England from the ground up. Freight rates began to rise quite noticeably. In May, 1915, they had reached about double the amount of the January quotations. The exhaustive and comprehensive analysis and verification of the British statistics on foreign trade for the months of October, 1914, until December, 1915, concerning which the February memorial of the Admiralty Staff gives full information, shows a very definite advance in prices paid for foreign imports.

The wholesale prices naturally followed the movement. So far as concerns the chief effect which it was the very purpose of the U-boat war to bring about, to wit, a shortage in the necessary food products and raw-stuffs, the February memorial spoke as follows: "On the whole the U-boat war of the spring and summer of 1915 did not limit the imports to such an extent that a shortage actually existed. On the other hand, it did lead to a shortage to the extent that in many cases the demands which arose for the needs of the Army could not be met with a sufficiency of supplies." Various elements combined to create this situation: On the one hand, fear of the re-

¹ *Sic* original German. See, however, *ante*, p. 510, where this name is given as "Strickhorn," in accord also with the original German.—EDITOR.

sults of the U-boat war spurred men on to bring in as many imports as possible, and, on the other hand, the constantly increasing needs of the army consumed more and more, and again England had to supply the needs of its allies, particularly the needs of France. But it was no longer possible for the imports to meet the increased demands. Hence came the rise in prices; and even as early as the spring of 1915 there was a very definite shortage—in meat, for instance.

The reason why no more had been accomplished was to be found in the conditions under which the U-boat war had to be carried on. It is well known, and why, that from the beginning it was subjected to restrictions of a non-military nature which crippled its efficiency. It was not only that neutral shipping, which handled approximately one third of the English imports, had to be spared; British ships were systematically provided with neutral colors, and in this way often succeeded in escaping their fate. Then on top of this came later the sparing of passenger steamers. The U-boat commanders were ordered to regard as passenger ships and spare vessels which had certain characteristics; but at the same time these characteristics were shared by many and, indeed, important classes of freight steamers, as for instance cold-storage steamers for meat transportation, which also had to be spared, particularly in view of the fact that the characters of the ships could not be ascertained with certainty at the distances at which they were observed, and in case of doubt ships had to be spared. There was also the impossibility of laying hold of steamers which were transporting troops and which appeared to be innocent passenger ships. The booty of the U-boats in spite of these difficulties, and hampered as they were by existing obstacles which made many a sacrifice unavoidable, reached an average for the months of February to August, 1915, of about 120,000 gross tons. And complete success was all the less possible of attainment in that a very material effect of the U-boat war, the psychological effect of worry, was made impossible by the interference of the United States, which heralded the end of the project. So the U-boat war dwindled with the end of August, before it had been able to bring about results perfectly possible of accomplishment even with the means at its command.

Nevertheless, the results which had been obtained were very noticeable and paved the way for a decision.

The peril of the U-boat war had been made clear and was expressed publicly in England in very many ways. A foundation had been laid which could serve for a basis of computing the effect of the weapon for the future. The victory of the U-boat war could now be announced positively, and to this effect: "By means of a shortage which manifested itself principally in a notable increase of prices of essential foodstuffs and manufactured articles, and raw material as well, it so damaged the commerce and trade of England that heavy economic and financial losses were felt in every direction."

English commercial life had been thrown into disorder. But the commercial life of a country is like a masterpiece of higher mechanics; let it once be disturbed, and there result a displacement of gears, friction, and breakage that continue without cessation. This was the result of the U-boat war last year which can not be overestimated.

How nearly it had performed its work at that time is shown in a leading article in the *Times* of November 11, 1916, which constitutes remarkable evidence on this point. This article was commenting on the report of the preceding year of the governmental committee on food supply, the majority of which recommended in October, 1915, far-reaching measures which, it is true, were never carried out because of the opposition of the minority, it being clear that the U-boat menace had been obviously overcome; and the paper characterizes the conclusion of the majority report with these words: "In the summer of 1915 the German submarine campaign had reached a point at which it threatened to diminish seriously the imports into this country [England]. The case for remedial measures was obvious and urgent."

II

THE SUBSEQUENT EVOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ENGLAND, AND THE U-BOAT WAR OF MARCH AND APRIL, 1916

Further observation showed us "that the situation which was created in English waters during the months of the U-boat war was repeated toward the end of the year 1915. We may say: The rôle of the U-boat war was taken over in these last periods by the scarcity of cargo space which, in turn, was increased by the U-boat war in the Mediterranean."

The condition of the English merchant fleet changed rapidly for the worse; construction could not be carried on at a sufficient rate to fill in the gaps resulting even from normal losses. The most serious factor was the ever-increasing requisitions of ships. The occupation of Saloniki played a prominent part in this connection, which, decided upon in 1915, and prepared for in the ensuing period, was completed in January 1916. The magnitude of this undertaking notably superseded that of the landing at Gallipoli.

From December, 1915, the freights increased "by leaps and bounds," according to the *Times* of the 23d of December, as the following table shows.

Cost of carrying one ton	Jan., 1914 (before the war)	Jan., 1915 (before the U-boat war)	May, 1915 (U-boat war)	Jan., 1916 (short- age cargo space)
Twelve month Atlantic voyage per month.	3s. 1d.	6s.	12s. 6d.	30s.
Round trip Atlantic voyage per month . . .	4s. 6d.	8s. 6d.	16s.	50s.
Wheat freight, Karachi (India)-England . . .	15s. 3d.		50s.	170s.
Cotton freight, Gulf Ports-England	32s. 6d.		150s.	330s.
Grain freight, New York-England	10s. 8d.		39s.	64s.
(do) La Plata-England	11s.		70s.	152s. 6d.

These unparalleled rates were the result and significant expression of the shortage in cargo space. Prices of merchandise rose accordingly. The wholesale prices calculated by the *Economist*, the leading English publication on economic subjects, had increased since the beginning of the war as follows:

December, 1914-January, 1915.....	About 10 per cent
May, 1915 (climax of U-boat war).....	“ 30 “ “
February, 1916 (cargo space shortage).....	“ 56 “ “

In addition thereto, there came about a disquieting shortage in the stock of grain on hand. The movement which had been set in motion by the U-boat war of the previous year had continued, and developed, along with the effect of the increasing shortage in ships, to the extent that the February memorial could state, looking at matters from the view-point of the English situation: “It follows that a new U-boat war would start under conditions incomparably more favorable than those existing in February, 1915, in view of the fact that the cargo space still available for the purpose of English imports and exports will be unable to endure further appreciable losses without affecting facilities for transporting absolutely essential imports and exports, and because England has been deprived of the greater part of its power of resistance by stringency, increase of prices and financial over-exertion.” Basing further remarks on the military situation which, when compared with the foregoing year, showed a material increase in military efficiency, the memorial reached the following conclusion. “If the new U-boat war is carried on ruthlessly, that is, on the basis that every craft in the war area will be subject to destruction, then the prospect is certain that, as the result of a shortage in freight space beyond her power of support, and a similar shortage in imports and exports and the resulting increases in price, and above all this, of being menaced by most dire financial perils, England will be forced to sue for peace within a definite period, and within six months at the longest.”

For reasons which are well known, the political branch did not feel that it was in a position to agree to the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare. It was rather a question of applying the principles of the restricted U-boat war of March and April of the preceding year, 1916. The White Book of the Imperial Government, of the 8th of February, 1916, which insisted upon Germany's right to look upon armed merchant ships as war craft, and consequently to sink them without warning, did, as a matter of fact, create the impression very generally of having thereby provided the U-boats with a substantially increased field for their activities. But a memorandum from the United States, delivered in March, opposed the German claim; so that generally speaking we were not able to put into practice the principles announced in the White Book. And, moreover, let us add to

this that the U-boat, if it is to determine the question of whether or not a merchant ship is armed, must approach close in order to avoid mistakes which can readily occur under changing conditions of visibility at sea, and where equipment is masked; and such an approach is always a decidedly dangerous matter. Then, too, passenger steamers were made an exception by the White Book, so that it was practically impossible, as it had been before, to get at steamers which were transporting troops.

Under these unfavorable conditions, they succeeded nevertheless in sinking 207,000 tons in March and 225,000 tons in April. But even this achievement which could not be considered an altogether effective result, at least succeeded in bringing about a new and very strong feeling of anxiety and in seriously damaging English commerce, the resistance of which had already been materially weakened. The American intercession was submitted to its final test. The strength of the pressure which the English-American community directed against this one point alone is the best proof of how serious the situation was considered to be on the other side of the Channel. For the reasons set out in the note of the Imperial Government of the 4th of May, the U-boat war was brought back within the limits of a war on commerce. As such, it has been carried on since the middle of October—in the Mediterranean with the scope agreed upon for this particular theater of war—and the results of its activities were 415,000 tons in October and about 432,000 in November. This last figure is subject to negligible changes.

III

THE PRESENT SITUATION

The memorial of the Admiralty Staff of the end of July which accompanied my letter to the Imperial Chancellor of the 27th of August and which is known to your Excellency, went very thoroughly into the question of the development of the situation in England from April, 1916, on. This document went into the question of cargo space and further, that of supplying England with foodstuffs and raw materials. This investigation had been made possible since, after the activities of the U-boats of March and April, and as the result thereof, enhancement of prices and shortage in England rapidly reached a point which demanded attention and an airing of the question, and gave rise to detailed public announcements concerning it. Thus an intimate view of the English problem of supply was provided. The supplying of England was made notably more difficult by the failure of crops all over the world, which became known after July, and began to have its influence on imports as well as upon prices. I consider it important to represent the present situation in its outstanding features, set out in the most condensed form possible, referring from time to time to the wealth of material as to facts provided by the July memorial, which I take occasion

to supplement at the same time. The comments which are gathered together in the enclosure contain still further evidence.

A. THE FOOD SITUATION OF ENGLAND

1. *The grain supply*

The increasing menace to the English food supply is manifested first of all in the extraordinary increase in prices of the most important foodstuffs and those which constitute the basic elements necessary to sustain the nation, that is, breadstuffs, which in England are limited to wheat, and in the anxiety displayed to keep the present system of the essential imports in operation. The difficulty lies in the poor results of the harvest the world over to an extent seldom before experienced, and in addition hereto the shortage in cargo space.

At the present time, that is, about three months since the beginning of England's harvest year (September 1), calculated conservatively and in her favor rather than against her, she is provided with wheat for a term of fifteen weeks. Of this stock, there is enough foreign wheat for four and one half weeks, enough resulting from the local harvest to cover seven and one half weeks more, and enough from the mills and dealers to cover a final three weeks. That is, she is provided with about 10 million quarters, which is equal to 2,177,000 tons and means a weekly allowance of 650,000 quarters or 141,500 tons.¹

The next question is, how this stock is to be increased. The stock resulting from the local harvest, which covers about 20 per cent of the yearly requirement of England, is constantly being decreased by the deliveries of the farmers, and at the end of the harvest year, that is, by the end of August or the beginning of September, will be consumed, with the exception of a reserve estimated in August, 1916, at 570,000 quarters or 125,000 tons. If we assume that the amount of this year's harvest consisting of approximately 6.5 million quarters or 1.4 million tons, which will serve for human sustenance, together with the amount carried over into the new year consisting of a reserve from the old harvest, is divided equally for the 52 weeks of the harvest year 1916-17, then 125,000 quarters or 27,200 tons will be available weekly, and the weekly shortage from the standpoint of English needs would be 525,000 quarters or 114,300 tons, or, reckoned in terms of one year, 27.25 million quarters or 6 million tons, which it would have been necessary to import from foreign parts. Up to the middle of November, the imports during the new harvest year have only brought a weekly average of 476,000 quarters or 103,600 tons, and the deliveries of the farmers are given as correspondingly greater on a weekly average of 174,000 quarters or 37,900 tons. As a result, the proportion of imports upon which England must depend

¹ Note 1, *post*, p. 1270.

increases, and in the same ratio the local stock decreases prematurely. With the exception of the reserve, on February 1, 1917, there will remain 2,672,000 quarters or 580,000 tons, provisions sufficient for only four more weeks, or, including the reserve, five more weeks; again, the total wheat stock would be sufficient for only twelve and one half weeks, or barely three months.

England gets her wheat which she does not raise herself from the United States and Canada, Argentina, India and Australia. Russia and Roumania are restricted during the war to negligible imports by way of the north Arctic; North Africa plays no appreciable part in the matter of imports. Usually the United States stands far at the head of these producing countries, and in the year 1915-16 delivered about 92 per cent of the British imports; but during this year they had a poor harvest of exceptionally low quality. It is of the utmost importance to get a correct picture of this situation and its results. It is precisely because of the far-reaching significance of our calculations that we must make allowance for the difficulty of reaching final conclusions based on crop estimates which naturally involve an element of uncertainty. For this reason, our present calculations are based upon the English statements themselves which, quite sufficiently characteristic as they are, have betrayed the constantly increasing endeavor to paint the picture in colors favorable to England, and to this end to do more and more violence to the actual figures.

If we marshal all the information touching North America,¹ we can state, with due caution in reaching our conclusion, that in the current year England will not be able to draw from the United States and Canada more than 13.75 million quarters or 3 million tons, before July, 1917, that is, from now on 50 per cent of her normal proportion of the North American import shipments of 27.5 million quarters or 6 million tons in all; further, that these imports, if they are maintained at the height of the last few weeks and hold until the beginning of April, will not even then cover two thirds of what is required by England in the way of foreign wheat imports. It is probable that this calculation is more favorable for England than the facts justify. Even if no embargo is placed on imports by the United States, which great numbers of consumers are seeking the aid of Congress to bring about, on account of the extraordinary increase in the price of daily bread and in the high cost of living generally, the assumption is at least tenable that the North American imports will fall off to a very serious extent even in February, and that England will find herself forced to obtain the greater part of its weekly requirement of 114,300 tons from some other source.

As a matter of fact, they have probably been forced to take energetic steps in this direction already, since even now only 344,000 quarters or 73,000 tons, on the average (barely 64 per cent of the necessary weekly import) is coming

¹ Note 2, *post*, p. 1272.

from North America. The Argentine Republic, India and Australia are shipping wheat to England, but certainly not in sufficient quantity to meet the requirements, behind which, up to the present time of the current harvest year, they have fallen by 50,000 quarters or 10,700 tons in their attempt to keep up the weekly average. The difficulty lies in the lack of cargo space and in the failure of the world's crop to meet requirements.

A consideration of the crops of the world, that is, a comparison of the deliveries of the exporting countries with the requirements of the importing countries,¹ makes it possible to get a real conception of the situation with regard to grain supply into which the English have fallen as a result of their war policy. The situation is becoming all the more critical on account of the fact that England, just as is the case with France and Italy, is in greater need than it was in the previous year on account of a shortage in the local crops, and that, on the other hand, the Argentine Republic also has been suffering from a poor harvest. The *Times* prophesied as early as November the announcement on the part of the Argentine Government of an embargo on the exportation of wheat and corn.

As the result of cautious estimates based on English sources, we get the following comparison, without reference to the possibility of embargos in the United States and Argentina:

HARVEST YEAR SEPTEMBER 1916 UNTIL AUGUST, 1917

Exports (in millions)			Imports required (in millions)		
	Quarters	Tons		Quarters	Tons
North America.....	30.5 ^a	= 6,640	England.....	27.3 =	5,943
Argentina.....	6 =	1,306	France.....	12 =	2,612
India.....	5 =	1,089	Italy.....	9 =	1,959
Australia.....	20 =	4,354	Portugal.....	0.5 =	109
Miscellaneous.....	1 =	218	Allies.....	48.8 =	10,624 ^b
Total.....	62.5 =	13,607	Holland.....	7 =	1,524
			Spain.....	0.5 =	109
Imports.....	68.3 =	14,870	Scandinavia.....	2.5 =	545
			Switzerland.....	1 =	218
Exports.....	62.5 =	13,607	Greece (incl. Serbia).....	2.5 =	545
			European neutrals...	13.5 =	2,941
			Countries outside of Europe.....	6 =	1,305
Difference.....	5.8 =	1,263	Grand total.....	68.3 =	14,870

^a Inclusive of 3 million quarters of spring wheat from July, 1917, on.^b *Sic* all figures in this column.

If we assume that, in the case of an unrestricted U-boat war beginning at the commencement of February, 1917, England were to book the imports

¹ Note 3, *post*, p. 1275.

of the European neutrals with the exception of one remaining portion for Norway of only one million quarters, or 218,000 tons, then the remaining portion of the amount, which otherwise would fall to the share of the other neutrals, that is, 1,590,000 tons, would be available to England and her friends for the remaining seven months of the harvest year, and both sides of the equation would be the same, except for a small balance of 330,000 tons.

One may have some hesitation in accepting these figures too literally, although they have been estimated on a basis which favors England, and the calculations of the German experts on wheat, as, for instance, Messrs. Newman and Weil, and the German technical journals such as the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Berliner Tageblatt* reach results very definitely more unfavorable to England. Let us assume that the results of the crops have been underestimated, that as the result of want and high prices supplies have been collected which have been left out of consideration, and that this increase overbalances the destruction of wheat cargos as the result of U-boat activities up to this time. *The fact remains that under the most favorable point of view they will be put hard to it to meet the situation, and that above all there will be no way of guaranteeing the food supply of the Allies in the absence of bounteous shipments of Australian wheat*, not even by imposing severe restrictions on consumption, since Australia is supposed to provide 30 per cent of the world's exports in wheat. The president of the board of trade, Mr. Runciman, said in his great speech to the lower house in November, 1915: "We shall depend for our subsistence during the next harvest year to a great extent upon Australia." But the switching of the wheat supply from North America to the Argentine Republic, India, and Australia means a great increase in the distance to be traveled by sea and an increase of more than 100 per cent in the number of ships required. The seriousness of the situation is made plain by the following reasoning: England is to import during this harvest year $13\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters from the Argentine Republic, India, and Australia. It is possible that by the end of February, 1917, some 11 million quarters may remain, which will have to be shipped in the course of the six months from March to August, 1917, and since over 90 per cent of the imports came from the United States in the following year, it follows that the southern hemisphere must this year serve as the source of supply for, in round figures, some 10 million quarters, that is, about 2.2 million tons, which North America shipped the year before. In order to ship 2.2 millions from North America to England in six months, about 440,000 gross tons are necessary. Under the present conditions, there will be required, instead, about 920,000 gross tons to bring the same amount up from Australia, India, and the Argentine Republic. Since England also needs the cargo space for her imports to France and Italy, this increase of 480,000 gross tons must, it is estimated, itself be increased by 50 per cent, giving a total sum of 720,000 gross tons. This means about 10 per cent of the merchant

fleet which England still has available for commercial purposes. *For every hundred thousand gross registered tons of freight space which is destroyed or not used means a shrinkage of 240,000 tons of wheat, i.e., twelve days supply for the English.*

I shall still have something further to say about the question of cargo space. Moreover, labor difficulties of a serious kind, and similar difficulties in the matter of trade and storage, are coming to a head in Australia, a socialistic country *par excellence*, and one which has provided hundreds of thousands for war purposes from amongst its scant population. On account of the labor difficulties, the ships which go to Australia in ballast for the purpose of returning with wheat cargos must carry sufficient coal in their bunkers in order to reach the next coaling station after leaving Australia. The transportation of wheat is congested in the Australian warehouses, on the railroads, and in the ports.

The anxiety and depression resulting from these conditions is made manifest by the condition of the English market. North American Manitoba wheat No. 1, which in peace cost about 36 shillings a quarter, and which had risen to 70 shillings by the beginning of 1916, has reached a price of 93 shillings or 435 marks per ton, as against 260 marks, which was the highest German price for wheat; Australian wheat, 85 shillings or 388 marks. English wheat costs 76 to 82 shillings or 357 to 366 marks, as against 34 shillings before the war.

The price of bread has gone up accordingly. The English four-pound loaf costs now $12\frac{1}{2}$ pence in the larger centers, which is approximately one mark for four German pounds, against 64 pfennigs, German price; the last peace price was $5\frac{1}{2}$ pence in England, or 50 pfennigs, German price. The bakers predict a further advance up to one shilling. And the weight of the bread, too, has been reduced to a great extent.

The situation of England will be rendered all the more difficult because she will be obliged to share her Indian and Australian imports with her allies. At the opening meeting of the British-Italian league of November 23d, Mr. Runciman referred to the "extraordinarily difficult and delicate negotiations" which, on this account, it devolved upon him to take up with the Marquis of Carcano—a statement which was, for many reasons, very significant.

The situation would not be so fraught with difficulty if only the question of wheat were involved, but this has not been the situation for a long time, ever since the shortage in cargo space of 1915 has been operating to throw the commercial situation of England into confusion. The shortage is a general shortage and can not be met in any way.

In the first place, wheat is, particularly in view of the elimination of the Central Powers, Russia and Roumania, beyond all comparison the most important cereal, for the importation of the remaining grainstuffs is in-

sufficient and more expensive on account of the general world situation. Rye, which is not grown in England, may, for practical purposes, be left out of consideration. The English barley crop which ordinarily meets more than 40 per cent of the local requirements, is, according to official reports, not bad as far as quantity goes but is poor in quality. In North America, which supplies the most barley to England, the Canadian harvest as well as that of the United States has not kept up with that of the preceding year, and the figures of the imports for the new harvest year are in proportion. English barley costs more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as much as it did in the last peace year, as a matter of fact, about 354 marks per ton on the average, as against 138 marks in peace time. The English oat crop, which meets about 75 per cent of the local consumption, has been announced to be bounteous in yield but of light weight. The imports from the chief producing countries of Canada and the United States, where the crops have not kept up for the mark set in the preceding year, were at first stronger than in the preceding year, but are falling rapidly at the present time. Here, too, the price is more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as high as in peace times: 348 marks a ton, against 126 marks before the war. As for corn, which has become decidedly important for England since the war, a new shortage has resulted from the poor crops in the Argentine Republic. In the months from January up to September, 1916, Argentina shipped about 53 per cent of the entire English imports of corn. To a large extent they are basing their hopes upon the United States, whose harvest, even in corn, has utterly failed to measure up to the harvest of the preceding year, and which has itself been drawing upon Argentina for corn. The price is 309 marks per ton, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the peace price of 122 marks.

All these conditions bearing on production and price are interrelated; the shortage which exists the world over calls for the exercise of all possible efforts to obtain produce wherever it may be had; every new crisis threatens to restrict imports to a greater extent or to cut them off altogether; prices are climbing higher and higher without creating the attention to which they are entitled in view of the general want. The situation created by the potato shortage in England, which seems scarcely less serious than that which exists in Germany, adds greatly to existing difficulties. The potato crops have suffered as the result of inability to obtain the potash fertilizers which were formerly drawn from Germany; and moreover, on account of the weather conditions and shortage in labor, they have not been gathered in time, and have, to a great extent, rotted underground as the result of cold and wet weather in October and November; particularly in Scotland and Ireland. Ireland has requested an embargo. Minister Runciman put the request in the lower house on November 2d, that everybody who could manage to do so should eat potatoes but once a day. The retail price is 14 to 19 pfennigs per German pound. What this means we in Germany, sad to say, know by our own experience.

It has been recommended to substitute rice for potatoes. But the rice imports have remained far behind those of the preceding year. The imports for the year are only about 500,000 tons and are very far from meeting the deficit in the potato crop.

This, then, is the situation with regard to vegetables for human consumption, and provender. The latter is particularly affected by the shortage in oil-seed products as the result of the failure of the Argentine flax seed crops. Flax seed products are the most important of the oil seed products imported into England; Argentine ships from 50 to 60 per cent thereof. Flaxseed cakes cost materially more than twice the peace price; and the increase in price is still greater in the case of cotton seed cakes. The English farmers have to reckon in advance upon paying more than twice the peace price for provender. Bran costs at the present time about 230 marks per ton. Every market report refers to the fact that the waste from the mills from which some bran can be obtained is scarcely to be had. Complaints are now multiplying since the wheat is to be ground still finer, and oats or corn-meal are to be used in the bread.

2. Other means of sustenance

In its reaction upon the English cattle-raising industry, this enhancement of prices constitutes the one cause which has driven meat prices upward. Add to this the shortage in imports which set in as early as the spring of 1915. In peace times, England obtained about 40 per cent of her requirements in the form of cold storage meats from the Argentine and Australia, and during the war time the United States became another producer; according to London, this made a proportion of $66\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. The falling off of imports amounted in the months of January to July, 1916, as compared with the corresponding period in 1914, to 36 per cent in beef, 46 per cent in mutton and 62 per cent in pork. The increase in the importation of rabbit meats, American hams and preserved meats did not weigh in the balance against the above. The decrease in the importations which, very shortly after the commencement of the war, were undertaken by the government with the aid of requisitioned ships which were provided with cold storage plants, is mainly attributable to the absence of cargo space and to the marked losses in Australian sheep culture as a result of the drought of the preceding year. On the other hand, military necessities increased to an extraordinary extent. The result was the increase of prices to an extent far exceeding 100 per cent, and particularly did this apply to the cuts of meat used by the middle classes. The falling prices which have come about of late have been attributed to the fact that, on account of the absence of provender, an unusually large number of cattle have had to be butchered.

Hundreds of butcher shops have been forced to close. Orders for the establishment of a meatless day were issued long ago, in connection with

which it has often been answered that the mass of the population in general, far from having only one meatless day, have been in the position of having, rather, but one meat day in the course of the week. Here, too, the situation is aggravated by the fact that France, whose number of cattle has been terrifically reduced by the war, as has been the case with England, too, has had to be provided with meat by England.

In this connection is to be discussed the stringent shortage as well as the enhancement in the price of milk, which costs six pence a quart in London, or 46 pfennigs a liter. It was in connection with this that the strongest excitement on the question of sustenance has been manifested. The difficulty experienced in feeding children has been the subject of special complaint. On the other hand, detailed statements have been submitted by experts for the purpose of showing that the increase in the price of meat and milk was justified by the agricultural cost of production.

Butter costs from 2.35 to 2.90 marks a pound, as against 1.30 marks in peace times. Half of what used to be consumed in the way of butter consists now of margarines which, on their side, cost 50 per cent more than before. The wholesale price for cheese of a moderately good quality is 150 marks for 50 kilograms, as against 110 marks of the highest German price.

Those who sit down at the English breakfast table have to pay 60 per cent more for bacon than before. The numerically superior imports have for the most part been taken for the use of the army.

Vital too at the present time is the falling off in supply as well as the enhancement of price in the English fish market. It has been reported that the catch of October, 1916, was 89 per cent behind that of October, 1913. Prices are everywhere announced as prohibitive. For instance, herring costs about six times as much as it did in peace time. In this we can note the result of the taking over of the fishing steamers and of their being manned for navy purposes, and the interference with the catch by military measures of blockade covering broad stretches of water.

Particularly stringent is the sugar supply. The national sugar commission has restricted the use to 75 per cent of that of 1915, but refuses to accept the responsibility of guaranteeing deliveries to that extent. Sugar is only sold at retail if from two to four shillings are spent at the same time for other commodities. And it is only under the same conditions that the retail dealer can get sugar from the wholesale dealer. How hard the poorer populace is hit thereby, is evident. Unions give their members sugar tickets. The fact that, on account of the sugar situation, no fruits could be preserved was made the subject of great complaint. The stores are besieged and broken into. The price is three times as high as it was in peace times; 50 kilograms cost 47 marks, as against 28.25 marks in Germany.

The importation of eggs has gone back $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent, in the months of

January to July, 1916, by nearly a billion, as against the same period of time in 1914. The price varies between 35 and 55 pfennigs apiece.

Enhancement in prices has manifested itself to a proportionate extent in all fields. It applies to vegetables, fruits, and, in short, everything; and it has been continuing along this same course unintermittently during the last months and with constantly gathering momentum. Matters have gone so far that, as the Manchester *Guardian* of November 11th specifically stated, the substitution of one commodity, for instance, meat, by another commodity was already out of the question, for vegetable foods were just as expensive as meat. It is made the subject of public comment that the people must be prepared in advance to meet a serious shortage of foodstuffs. And it is particularly significant that the army ration has been limited to a noticeable extent and is being constantly cut down further. The army is already being provided with the "all-inclusive sausage."

I believe that I can rest satisfied with these data concerning the English situation with regard to food supplies. All details can be supported by an abundance of proof, since the English papers have made daily and detailed reports on all these questions.

In addition to the general enhancement in prices and the absolute lack of such essential foodstuffs as potatoes, meat, milk, fish, sugar, eggs, and the ensuing shortage in all foodstuffs, we may add that practically everything necessary for subsistence, such as coal, light, linen, boots, clothes, soap, etc., has been subjected to the same enhancement in price.

3. *The peril, and the requirements of the people*

It is important to be clear upon the point of the effect which these circumstances have had upon the condition of the people, and to what extent the government is enabled to come to their assistance. In view of the fact that a thorough idea can be obtained only from a study of economic and political developments, these must be considered somewhat more in detail than the situation would otherwise call for.

Up to a few months ago, the statement was often made that, on the whole, the situation of the working classes was no less than wholly satisfactory; that the only classes with whom matters were not going satisfactorily were the recipients of fixed salaries, those living on annuities from the government, and perhaps members of the laboring classes whose occupation had received a set-back on account of the war. As proof of this, attention was probably called to the reduction in numbers of the unemployed, which, of course, is fully explained by the shortage of man-power for civil employments as the result of recruiting. The fact is that ever since the spring of 1916 a strong labor movement has set in which, spreading from one class of labor to another, has step by step brought about an increase in wages. It is apparent that those employed in war industries were by far best off. In

June the increased war-time wages were announced as being 10 per cent; they have probably increased by this time to 15 per cent. The improvement in incomes has not as yet come to a halt because it is helped out by more regular work, overtime, and the employment of more members of the family, such as women and children. Complaints are already being made concerning the use of child labor. This, however, is certain, that the average increase of income received throughout broad circles of labor by no means keeps pace with the increase of the cost of living. And moreover, the law of averages is not applicable, because the comparatively high incomes of special classes of those employed in war work unduly increase the percentage of the general increase in income, whereas those workmen engaged in less lucrative occupations fail all the more to approach the average struck. Under these circumstances, it becomes a very practical question as to how such masses of people whose wants are not satisfied on the basis of any average that is struck, will be affected by the increase in prices. The representatives of the laborers have always challenged the statement that things were, in the main, going well with the laboring classes. Add hereto numerous individual reports and statistics submitted by unions and similar organizations which give as proof of the want and the limitations to which these circles are subjected, particularly in matters of sustenance, detailed calculations based upon the average expenses of small families. These representations have met with no difficulty in being published, even in the union papers. At this time, since the enormous increase in the cost of living in the last few months, we fail to hear anything more concerning the prosperity of the masses in general.

As early as the spring of 1916, a movement was started by the unions, which commanded with a tone of growing insistence, even with growing menace, that the government regulate the question of food supply. The attacks against the "food usurers" of the farming districts and of the middle-man class are identical to those made in Germany. The farmers have been made the subject of attack on account of the increase in the price of milk, and because of the shortage of potatoes, and, indeed, submitted to quite similar reproaches. As is the English custom, women and children have protested by means of processions against limitations being placed upon those foodstuffs which are most essential to child life. Similarly, the increase in the price of bread gave rise to agitation. Everywhere, resolutions were drawn up and requests submitted to the government, which was repeatedly questioned in the lower house by the labor union leaders. "Drastic" measures were demanded; a sliding wage scale adapted to the fluctuations of food prices, the establishment of maximum prices, the taking over of the most essential articles of food, such as milk in the market-places of the various communities, or—and this was quite general—the taking over of "full control" of the food supply by the government with the purpose of

having the government buy up all articles of food and distribute them—such were the demands made. As early as the beginning of October, the labor leader Crooks was calling for the “strong man.” It is of course understood that most of these demonstrations were directed against the profits of the producers and dealers. The feeling became constantly more general and more menacing. Politicians and demagogues became self-appointed spokesmen for the movement, and warned the government against the coming catastrophe unless the people were not clearly informed as to what it was willing to do and could do, and the reverse.

4. The policy of the government

The government met these demonstrations with reluctance and but slowly. It had accomplished what it had thought itself able to accomplish in the first place by taking over the meat and sugar imports from the beginning of the war, and by buying in wheat on various occasions, but as for the rest, left the question of supply and, above all else, the question of prices, to themselves. For financial reasons, it exerted itself to the utmost to check the rise in wages; and, too, it was generally assumed that the high prices would necessarily lead to a restriction of consumption, and so reduce the enormous cost of the import of foodstuffs, to the benefit of the credit balance of the country. The importation of foodstuffs into England from January until July, 1916, cost the British Government 4.8 billion marks, as against 3.2 billions for the corresponding period in 1914.

On the 20th of September, Minister Runciman presented the case of the government in an open letter, and to the effect that prices as well as freights depended on the world's market, that prices had increased to a notable extent even in the case of foodstuffs which had been bought by the government, such as meat and sugar, and that he must counsel against taking ill-considered steps and against overestimating the results of interference on the part of the government.

On the 30th of September, the preliminary report of the committee on food supply which had been engaged in supplying the country with meat, milk and bacon, was published; and it was submitted with a very noticeable hesitation, which was the subject of severe criticism and attributed to the existence of differences of opinion among members of the committee and to the fact that they had endeavored to discover effective means for their purposes without being able to find them. The report contented itself with recommending the well-known “small means”; at least the advice to compel those who had bought foreign meats from the government to ask “reasonable prices” when they sold it, was a novelty, as was the authorizing of the local authorities to designate places where the articles in question should be sold if the retail dealers undertook to demand unconscionable prices. A vote of the small majority of the commission recommended “far-reaching” steps to

be taken by the government whereby meat and bacon should be bought by the government alone, to arrange for proper selling prices and, further, to establish a maximum price.

All this seemed to the public to be too timid. The price tidal wave swelling upward from week to week pushed the government on and on against its will. And now came the disquieting harvest news from the allied countries and from North and South America as well as news of the efficiency of the U-boat war on commerce, which at that time was being pushed with increasing vigor. On the 10th of October, Minister Runciman announced in the lower house that the government had taken complete control of the wheat market. This was the first indication of the transition to war socialism. As a result of this step, people were generally agreed upon the point that they would not stickle on the question of prices if only the matter of supply were taken care of. Whereas prior to this the government had only occasionally and partly solved the question of procuring certain limited amounts of the food supplies, the new measure consists in providing that the grain trade can buy wheat abroad only under the authority and on the account of the government, and can sell it in the domestic market only in accordance with its instructions; whereas the purely domestic trade is just as free as it was before, as far as distribution and establishment of prices is concerned. This measure was based on the necessity of providing for imports adequate to meet existing needs which, it was claimed, the trade had not been able to bring about. The *Times* of the 11th of October calls attention to the fact that the measure was undoubtedly due to the desire of proving to the public at large that the government was not passive. The newspaper was also of the opinion that the time had come to warn the public against entertaining the hope that this participation by the government would lead to cheaper prices. The objection was loudly voiced that the prices in foreign countries must certainly go up if it were to become known that so powerful a factor as the English Government stood behind the purchases. Time has proved how correct the prophecy was. Wheat, flour, and bread have become dearer in price since that time.

As far back as the 17th of October, Minister Runciman stated in his report, and by way of defense against the representatives of the labor party and of the unionists as well, that their public discussions served no other purpose than to drive prices still higher. At that time he still referred to reports from various localities, according to which the laborers were not badly off. He referred with disapproval to "heroic" measures which did more harm than good, and commented on the advice given by the committee on food supply.

But the views of the government could not hold up against the increasing high prices, the agitation from industrial centers and the pressure of parliament. On November 15, Minister Runciman announced in the lower house

that course of action which appeared to blaze a new way for England's political economy, and which, from that time on, has occupied the center of the stage as far as public interest in England is concerned.

The minister called attention to the changed situation which had come about from the fact that England found herself materially dependent upon Australia for its food supply, described in most earnest terms the extraordinary difficulties of the shipping question, and laid the foundation thereby for the necessity of the appointment of a minister of food supply (food controller) vested with extraordinary power, a food dictator who should remove the burden from the shoulders of the existing ministries and should devote himself entirely to the one great problem which would confront him in his official capacity; further, he announced the necessity of the promulgation of a blanket law which should contain the framework for far-reaching powers of the new office. Measures must be adopted which would bring about the following results: the prevention of the throwing away or useless destruction of foodstuffs; prohibition or prescription of their conversion to certain purposes; regulation of their production and their economic disposition; limitation of traffic in foodstuffs; provision for the listing and confiscation of stock on hand; and finally, most important of all, the establishment of maximum prices and the regulation of sales and of the distribution of foodstuffs.

These are regulations the details of which were still to be announced by instructions which would be promulgated; a first step was taken herewith, inventories were ordered, hostelries were to be allowed to serve no more than three courses at meals; a limit was set to the prices which could be charged for meals served to officers and men in the hostelries in question; wheat which up to the present time had been ground on a 70 per cent basis was, according to the quality, prescribed at the rate of 73 to 78 per cent; the baking of pure wheat flour was forbidden, and a bread of a uniform quality was introduced of which oatmeal and corn-meal should form elements; meatless days were proposed; a limit was set for the price of milk, which, on the whole, was in agreement with the prices last fixed, and the same was to be true with regard to wheat.

The change in the government led to a temporary truce in the development of these measures, which has already been the occasion of new meetings and resolutions on the part of the industries. It is expected that the new cabinet, unhampered by the difficulties of the late ministers, will carry through the last phases of the policy which the Asquith ministry has initiated.

5. The prospects for effective relief

The progress of the governmental policy shows very clearly the difficulty with which Lloyd George and his collaborators also have to deal. It would be erroneous to assume that the ministry which has just stepped down fought

against taking over the "full control" of the food supply of the nation, from motives of pure principle and theoretical one-sidedness. The steadfast champions of free trade and of the principle of free service to the State of which there are still some in England, have often enough voiced their complaint that the cabinet had thrown one old English principle after another overboard, and the government has on the other hand always announced that it had to base its actions, not according to pure theory, but on the practical needs of the moment. But in the case before us, it recognized the difficulty resulting from the restrictions imposed upon the methods of supply which had come to manifest themselves, both from the enhancement of prices and from the peculiarities which characterize English conditions.

The introduction of the war bread increases the difficulties of the proven-der question, quite aside from the technical difficulties which bid fair to make themselves felt in connection with the milling industry. The farmers at once raised the cry that they would now be able to get less bran than ever, and at prices which it would be still harder to meet; so that their situation is rendered all the harder by depriving them of barley or oats or corn to be used for human consumption. The effect is to be observed in the upward leap taken by prices.

Still more serious is the policy of setting a maximum price. The experience we have had in Germany shows that on this road there is no stopping. Attention has already been called to the fact that the standardization of the price of milk has not increased its production; as a matter of fact, word comes from certain districts that the milk supply is becoming less. We have seen in our case that the standardization of prices has had a detrimental effect on the produce which reaches the market in bulk. This question is still more serious in England because the farm production is far less than it is in Germany, and because if it goes down much further, imports from foreign countries will have to be increased in inverse ratio. It is just this which, above all else, England must exert every effort to avoid. The dropping off of field cultivation in England is noted with the greatest anxiety—a circumstance which forces itself all the more upon the attention on account of the absence of labor, and the public has long since been busying itself in the attempt to devise some way of meeting this situation.

But the most difficult question is that of the apportionment of food. In Germany, we were able to work out the bread-ration problem in the course of months at a time when no want was felt; proper care on this point was able from time to time to bring about a substitution in the use of individual food-stuffs. As time went on, our blanket became shorter and shorter. But let us imagine, if we can, what it would have meant if we had had to devise our bread-ration system for the first time in the summer of 1916. Herein lies England's great difficulty. Assuming even that the situation, not as regards prices, but as regards the mass of material available for use, is very materi-

ally more favorable to England than in our case, it is at least true that the great masses of the people have already had to limit themselves, and that, if the bread now used daily would have to be still more sparingly doled out by governmental action, this would mean that a dangerous inroad was taking place. And all the more so, as statistics and other sources of information from unions show that while the people restricted themselves noticeably in the use of all other foodstuffs, the bread portion was increased to make up for it.

But there is still another consideration. Again and again have the government and semi-official newspaper articles pointed out the difference which exists as to this question between Germany and England. On October 4, the Manchester *Guardian* published, as a part of an obviously inspired article, the significant statement that German officialdom was apparently better organized than the British, and that the German people were certainly more disciplined than the English. The sugar commission rejected the proposal of a general sugar ticket policy in October, on the ground that if, in any event the English people could be induced to agree to such measures, to put them through would in any case call for more time and labor than could be spared in the midst of war. Again and again did the former government declare that the ticket system was not practicable in England. If it was demanded by the unions, the only purpose was probably to equalize the share of food supply to which those who were well off were entitled, with that to which those of poor means were entitled, not to decrease the share of the great mass of the people. But without this, the system of rations will not lead to results which alone make it worth while, the material cutting-down of the country's consumption.

The accomplishments of the English in the munitions industries and in connection with the organization of a great army have frequently been made the object of comment as indicative of the unlimited capacity of the English people for organization. The importance of those accomplishments should not, however, lead unqualifiedly to the assumption that they will be repeated in a field where the situation is entirely different. So far as the production of munitions is concerned, it was simply a question of gathering together the principal part of the working forces of a land, old in industries, of developing something which already existed in embryo, not of taking up something fundamentally new. So far as the army was concerned, that existed in embryo too. The census and the universal draft were new here. It was sufficient at first to organize the overwhelming majority of men capable of bearing arms, and proof of the fact that this work was only carried on piecemeal is the circumstance that numerous people—people who had evaded service—are still being recruited by the old method, which is even now being continued in the form of a recruiting officer and his organization traveling around the country. A system of the rationing of

foodstuffs makes demands of a distinctly different nature. If it is to be effective, it means that it is to be preceded by an absolutely faultless census of the population and the methodical distribution of the masses of grain and foodstuffs which are available in such a way that the last person entitled to bread in the whole country will receive his portion of it. In this connection, Germany had the advantage of her organization of public authorities such as the district *landrat* and local magistrates. This does not exist in England and can not be created at short notice. It is interesting to note that the well-known periodical, the *Spectator*, in an article of December 2, in which it takes up the question of the promotion of farm production, recommends the establishment of a county controller and a district controller which would, in effect, correspond to a *landrat* and a district magistrate. Obviously this goes to show that up to the present time there has been no official vested with the necessary powers to undertake these tasks.

On the other hand, we must take into account the lack of discipline of the English people. It is not that the Englishman lacks either self-sacrifice or pertinacity, but it is well known how refractory the English laborer is, particularly in the coal and iron industries, and the development of the great wage movements in this war has furnished further astounding experiences in this field. The peace party, whose influence is constantly increasing, is already taking advantage of the rationing system as a good means for agitation. I must, however, rest satisfied at this point with having called attention to these difficulties.

The inferences to be drawn are obvious. The conclusion which I reach, without underestimating the talent of the English for organization, is *that a rationing system capable of bringing about the husbanding of requisite supplies to an extent approximating that which was accomplished in Germany is not possible in England, or at least is no longer possible.*

In this connection, it is important to examine briefly the figures of the British wheat supply. England consumes weekly 141,500 tons of wheat. This number would be reduced to about 110,000 tons under a food control system based on the German model. If we assume, and to do so would be to do violence to the probabilities as far as human computation may serve us, that this amount could be cut down by 15 per cent, then the weekly demand would be about 120,000 tons. Then the wheat stock which, on an estimate most favorable to England, would be at her disposal on the 1st of February would be sufficient not for 12½ weeks, which would be the equivalent of a poor three months, but for 14 weeks, that is, three months and one week. For England to succeed during the first three months of the U-boat war in bringing in only wheat enough to be stocked at the end of this period again for a further three months, that is, 1,670,000 tons, which, as a matter of fact, would have to come from the southern hemisphere, 1,400,000 gross registered tonnage would be necessary for the purpose. Last year, 850,000

gross registered tons were necessary to bring in during the course of three months the necessary weekly supply of wheat at that time, 650,000 quarters or 2 million tons, 90 per cent of which came from the United States and only 10 per cent from the southern hemisphere. It is plain that in spite of food control, the lack of cargo space is increasing at a stupendous rate.

And we can view this situation in still another light, when we realize what it will be when subjected to the full effect of the unrestricted U-boat war, when the greatly increased sinkings of grain ships will affect arrangements still more deeply, and when, again, the food control system is a system least adapted to withstand attacks of this kind. How is the question of distribution going to be kept up if one ship after the other fails to arrive in this port today or in that port tomorrow, and if distribution will have to be put off to a degree which it is impossible to foresee?

6. The shortage in raw materials

The question of foodstuffs which has been considered up to this time constitutes the most essential element of the sustenance of a people, in that it affects every single individual most vitally. For the rest, the situation with regard to raw material is no different. And the situation is at its worst with regard to the daily bread of commercial life, the coal supply. Partly as the result of recruiting which has taken away an unusually large percentage of people from the coal mines, and partly due to the averseness of the miners to discipline, and they are the hardest class of laborers to handle in England, the production of 287 million English tons (1,116 kilograms) in 1913, went down to 265 millions in 1914 and 253 millions in 1915; and in contrast to this, the local demands have risen from 189 to over 200 million tons, unquestionably mainly as the result of the requirements of the fleet and of the army. The demand is growing at the rate of $1\frac{1}{4}$ millions monthly, whereas the production was only able to be increased by a million tons a month for 1915. Exports dropped from $73\frac{1}{2}$ million tons in 1913 to $43\frac{1}{2}$ millions in 1915, and will not amount to more than 40 million in 1916. And in the meantime, France and Italy are both suffering a crippling coal shortage as a result of the loss of German production; and here, too, the lack of freight space plays a most important part. Aside from this consideration, which applies directly to her allies, there is the further point with regard to England herself, that coal, which has risen in price by more than 70 per cent, represents 10 per cent of the value of English exports. This class of exports is not only important from the financial standpoint, but because it constitutes a means for forcing the neutrals to submit to England's wishes. For this reason, the coal question is causing great anxiety in England. It is significant that on the 25th of November, there was a meeting of 3,000 representatives of the miners in London, on which occasion Prime Minister Asquith adjured the miners to increase production to the very highest ex-

tent possible. This was absolutely devoid of results. As before, there continue to be complaints of numerous strikes in the mines; it was only a short time ago that a dangerous wage movement of the miners of southern Wales terminated with the taking over of the mines into the control of the Commerce Chamber, and also, however, with an assent to the question of granting the increase in wages which was asked for. Attempts are being made to cut down the use of coal for domestic purposes as much as possible. The recent extraordinary restriction of railroad travel is one of the measures adopted for this purpose. It is with this end in view, for example, that Christmas leave in the English army is not permitted. The July memorial of the Admiralty Staff (pages 36 to 37) sets out in detail the difficulties of wood production. England's forestry is poor. Imports have gone back by 20 per cent from the standard set in peace times. The importation of timber for use in mines, which is required to meet at least 50 per cent of the demand, is of particular importance. This importation means a monthly coal production of 10 million tons. Prices have risen by nearly 200 per cent.

Reports on the iron industry are to the effect that the production in neither England nor North America is sufficient to meet the demand.

The supply of cotton has become difficult because the cotton crop in the United States, which furnishes 80 per cent of the English demand, and also in Egypt, remains far below normal. Therefore, the reports from Liverpool and Manchester constantly express anxiety about the raw material situation in its application to the textile industries, which are not important merely from the military standpoint but provide 25 per cent of the entire English export trade. During the course of the last two years, the price of American cotton has gone up to one shilling a pound, that is, it has nearly tripled.

There are complaints about the shortage in wool. The government has taken over the domestic wool-clip and is negotiating for the purchase of the Australian clip which has been seriously affected by the poor sheep year. The providing of England with the necessary sustenance will fail primarily on account of the lack of cargo space. The importation of petroleum has declined by more than 25 per cent when compared with peace times, and domestic consumption has been materially restricted. It is beginning to be difficult to furnish the army and fleet with the tremendous amounts which are necessary.

This is the general situation. It may be worthy of note, since straws show which way the wind blows, that complaints have been made about the fullness of ladies' skirts called for by fashion, and that the style of high boots for ladies has even been made the subject of questioning in the lower house.

7. Conclusions

If we marshal those facts which go to make up the general situation with regard to the provisioning of England, and consider them from the standpoint

of the U-boat war, the following deductions result: That a U-boat war launched in the immediate future, by February 1, 1917, at the latest, would take place under the most favorable conditions which could be possibly imagined for the purposes of success. Want and enhancement of prices dominate the entire situation. So that England is faced with the necessity of using more than twice as much cargo space as has been necessary up to the present time for importing the most important of foodstuffs, wheat; and it is open to very serious doubt, whether the export deliveries at the disposal of England and its allies are sufficient to meet the demand up to the end of the harvest year. The U-boat war would have a period of from five to six months before the new harvest in the United States could come in as a working factor, and from six to seven months before the domestic harvest of the Allied countries comes in sight. Whatever might be accomplished in the way of organization to lighten the difficulties of the question of supply would require far more time than would be available by the beginning of February; moreover, the direct effects of the U-boat war would place the most difficult obstacles in the path of such measures.

It must be borne in mind that England has become overwhelmed by the difficulties of this situation at the very time when an ocean commerce, much diminished, it is true, but still very respectable, is entering and leaving its ports; and that the weapon of the U-boat war, painful as its results up to the present time have been to England, has thus far not been exercised against English commerce to an extent even approaching its full measure of efficiency. One has only to become acquainted with the question of cargo space in order to appreciate the prospects of the U-boat war. As Minister Runciman stated in the lower house on November 15, the question of cargo space is "unquestionably the key to the situation." All depends upon the extent of the freight space which England has at its disposal for the purpose of providing itself and its allies with the necessary imports.

B. TONNAGE

1. *The cargo space at present available*

According to *Lloyd's Register*, the English merchant fleet contained about 21 million tons gross register at the beginning of the war, and 21,282 million tons on October 1, 1916. From this sum, there are to be deducted over 530,000 tons due to losses of ships which Lloyd does not count. There are further deductions to be made in the shape of newly constructed ships which Lloyd includes, to an amount which can not be definitely represented in figures, which were probably off the ways but which were not completed and placed in service. Further, we must deduct the sum of 180,000 tons lying in German harbors, and at least 243,000 tons shut up in the Baltic and in the Black seas. In October, an additional 210,000 tons were sunk. So that by the 1st of November there were left scarcely 20 million tons of available

tonnage. During the war, England sold some 478,000 tons to foreign Powers, whereas, on the other hand, the amount of foreign ships bought was probably not much smaller.

The losses during the war were about 2.5 million tons up to the 1st of November. As a result of the war, the increase in ships built is behind to the extent of about 2 million tons. So that the situation of the merchant fleet on the 1st of November was about 18 per cent behind what it would have been had it not been for the war. The war losses must be calculated at 10 per cent. We must also bear in mind the circumstance that, according to the method of computation in *Lloyd's Register*, about 400,000 tons of shipping taken over from the Central Powers are included; a source of increase which will not be repeated. It is further worthy of note that the *Liverpool Journal of Commerce* computes in a report copied by the other English papers an additional million tons of losses, attributing this to "excessive wear."

To the war losses may be attributed no other significance than the extent of the gaps which they cause in the registered tonnage, as far as the prospects of the English merchant marine after the war are concerned; and from this point of view they are looked upon in England as very serious. But these losses have a far different significance so far as their effect on the war itself is concerned. Admiral Lord Beresford pointed out, in the session of the House of Lords of May 3, 1916, that the only proper method of calculation consisted in computing the war losses by the number of vessels which still remained available for commercial purposes. In other words, for the purpose of reaching a conclusion with regard to existing registered tonnage, the tonnage which has been requisitioned must be deducted. In the same session of the House of Lords, Lord Curzon stated in the name of the government that 43 per cent of the merchant fleet had been requisitioned for military purposes, and on September 5th Mr. Balfour set it at 42 per cent. Shipping circles set it at materially higher amounts. It is probably correct to proceed on the premise of Lord Curzon's figures; in this case, the ships under requisition would amount to 8.6 million tons if we start with 20 million tons as a basis. Lord Curzon further called attention to the fact that 14 per cent of English tonnage had been requisitioned for the purpose of bringing in foodstuffs for England and for its allies. At least an additional 10 per cent of this amount, to wit, 2 million, must be calculated as being available to the allies, and 4 per cent, although requisitioned, is probably used for the commercial purposes of England. According to these figures, 9.6 million tons remain available for this trade. This amount is still further reduced to 8 million tons if we deduct about 500,000 tons for the coastwise trade and an estimate of about a million tons for ships now undergoing repair; and just at present repairs take up a tremendous amount of time. This makes a falling off in the tonnage used for the transport of commodities

in English commerce of 60 per cent, when compared with the total available tonnage of November 1st, and of 68 per cent compared with the tonnage which would probably have been at England's disposal had it not been for the war.

The statistics which are contained in the reports issued by the British Chamber of Commerce with regard to the trade and shipping of the United Kingdom, based on the ships which have entered English ports and have cleared after loading, month in and month out, invite proof of the above calculations. These statistics, now before us, are available up to September, 1916. It describes the ocean commerce in thousands of net registered tons, as follows:

VESSELS ENTERING AND CLEARING ENGLISH PORTS, JANUARY-JULY, 1914 AND 1916

	Entering		Clearing	
	British ships	Foreign ships	British ships	Foreign ships
January-July, 1914 (last peace period)....	18,557 = 62.2%	9,465 = 38.8%	23,587 = 59.7%	15,938 = 40.3%
January-July, 1916....	11,643 = 66.4%	5,885 = 33.6%	10,238 = 48.6%	10,827 = 51.4%
	= 37.3% less	= 37.8% less	= 56.6% less	= 32% less

Therefore, taking the average of the first seven months of the year 1916, and comparing it with the corresponding latest peace period, we find that 56.6 per cent less loaded ships have cleared; there being a retrogression of only 37.3 per cent in the case of ships coming in, and at the same time far less than the falling off in cargo space. Here it is that the use of the merchant marine increased to the utmost possible extent, counts; thus, the great passenger steamers which have but little cargo space are requisitioned for military purposes and, on the other hand, the freighters proper alone are left for the purpose of carrying merchandise. But above all else, British shipping has almost entirely been withdrawn from all remaining trade routes which England has with bitter regret been obliged to sacrifice in favor of providing the necessary sustenance at home. By so doing, English shipping companies have during the war renounced the overwhelming portion of their world trade. Their official publications complain bitterly in almost every number, and at the same time point with jealousy and anxiety to the advantages which have accrued to the fast-developing neutral shipping trade at the cost of the British.

The falling off in shipping must not be put on the same basis as that of the traffic in merchandise, which has by no means suffered similar losses. It is true that the English traffic in merchandise is not to be confused, as is often done in England, by the values presented by import and export statistics; much more is it a question of quantity, and the published figures in which the quantity is set out gives a very misleading picture on account of the

enormous increase in prices. Attention may be called, in passing, to the fact that it is essential to remember that exports are kept up to a certain figure mainly on account of the deliveries of the necessities of warfare to England's allies, whereas the peace-time export business of England is simply undermined.

Shipping statistics can also be used to endeavor to ascertain what proportion of the English fleet is still being used for the transportation of wares. This makes it necessary at the outset to calculate the tonnage which is necessary for performing the voyages of the incoming and outgoing ships between England and the various countries of departure and destination, duly specified in those statistics. This calculation, the details of which are to be found in note 4,¹ leads to the conclusion that on the average of the months of July until September, 1916, about 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ million gross registered tons of English tonnage were engaged in the transportation of English merchandise. How are we to account for the difference between this and the 8 million tons already mentioned, which were supposed to be available for the transportation of merchandise? On October 17, Minister Runciman announced in the lower house that 297 ships—formerly they were numbered by the thousands—were permanently employed outside for seeing to it that England "should not be entirely crowded out of the shipping business." If we assume that these ships were not, on the average, under 1500 tons, then, taken altogether, they represent a tonnage of about 450,000. The remainder may be accounted for by the fact that more ships were requisitioned than was assumed to be the case, or were under repairs, or awaiting sailing orders, or sailing in ballast without loading. The proof afforded by this calculation is significant, namely, that by no possibility are more than the 8 million tons above referred to engaged in transporting English commodities, and in all likelihood the number thus engaged is far less in amount.

2. *The increase in freight rates*

So tremendous a falling off in the English cargo space makes it possible for us to conceive the unexampled phenomena which have been manifested with regard to English shipping; the stupendous increase in freight rates which has come about, as well as the lack of tonnage which has proved so terrible a burden for England. A dissertation upon this subject could well be headed with the remark of a leading article of the *Times* of November 16th: "*The increase in the cost of foodstuffs and the ever-present menace of a still further increase, and even of a shortage of food, is to a great extent to be attributed to the shortage of tonnage, and this in its turn is at least partially due to the renewed activities of the German U-boats.*"

It may be observed with regard to freight, that the English Government has been successful since the spring of 1916, mainly on account of the assistance afforded by the threat of requisition, in keeping down freight rates on

¹ *Post*, p. 1276.

certain essential commodities, for instance, grainstuffs to England, coal to France and Italy. It is true that those quotations which are most moderate of all are still far higher than they were in peace times. A wholly radical policy setting the limit to the rates which could be required was out of the question, on account of the fact that no less than $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of England's sea trade was handled by neutral vessels which, after all, were only to a limited extent subjected to English influence. But if it occasionally occurs that, under pressure of denying them bunker coal or under pressure of other means in the use of which England is not squeamish, they are induced to undertake a voyage under payments of but moderate freight rates, these vessels often withdraw from this pressure and take advantage of the situation in other localities, since the sea permits man to change his course in whatever direction he desires. When, for instance, a limit for freight rates on coal between England and France, and England and Italy, was set, the objection was made that there was no cargo space; even the Norwegians, who are most completely under the influence of England, vanished in the direction of better-paying routes. The freight rates of free shipping will continue to ascend, the greater the encroachments upon free commerce.

I believe that I may refrain from bringing forward numerous evidences of the high freight rates which, by the way, have begun to climb again very rapidly during the last few weeks. These matters are all very well known. I shall limit myself to one example: The freight from Burma to England costs 250 shillings against 100 shillings in December, 1915, when it was thought that the rates had reached their highest point, and as against 26 before the war; from Alexandria to Liverpool, they are now asking 185 shillings as against $6\frac{1}{2}$ before the war. There are only two points which call for brief comment.

First, the significance of the freight rates with regard to the English credit balance. It has been assumed on the part of many that they are of material assistance in helping England carry the heavy financial burden of the war. This is true only to a limited extent. England herself carries the freight for her imports. She only imports what she most urgently needs, and no foreign seller is any longer able to take the freight at his own risk in order to land his goods in England. But England pays $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of the import freight to foreign shippers. On the other hand, the freight on exports may be noted as in the main falling upon the foreigner; previously, the English shippers got 60 per cent of this, now a bare 50 per cent. To make use of the figures covering the first nine months of the year 1916: England paid to foreign shippers freight amounting roughly to 7.6 million of incoming tonnage net register, and received from foreign countries freight on 13.5 million tons departing; the freight for the incoming 15.2 million tons which went into the pockets of the English shippers constitutes, with the assistance of the war profits tax imposed upon these shippers, as is made plain in the July

memorial of the Admiralty Staff, an ultimate heavy indirect tax which the English consumer has to pay to this government.

A second point is worthy of note, namely, that the enhancement of freight rates is in no wise on a par with the advance in the price of commodities. On the other hand, it only constitutes a fraction of the increase in prices which, above all, is to be attributed to the disparity between supply and demand, and the general uneasiness which is the necessary result. Thus, for example, Minister Runciman referred on the 28th of September to the fact that wheat freights, in spite of their extraordinary rise, had only increased the price of bread by $\frac{1}{2}$ penny, the price of which had risen to the extent of four or five pence.

3. *The "cargo-space famine"*

Freight rates constitute the barometer of the pressure under which shipping has had to labor. The famine in cargo space from which England has been suffering since the end of 1915 has, particularly since the result of the gnawing effect of the U-boats, reached a point which has become absolutely vital in its application to England's political development. These matters, too, are well known. It is desired above all things to ship wheat; the result is that corn freighters can obtain no cargo space. The result is the same in the case of sugar and meat. Foodstuffs are to have the first call on transportation, and for this reason the government is obliged to inform the textile industries who are complaining about the shortage of raw material, that it is not in a position to moderate the freight rates on cotton because that would simply result "at the expense of other goods." Wool imports are suffering. The importation of coal is "actually at its last gasp." The chief of the commerce division of the Munitions Ministry demands that imports in the way of foodstuffs be restricted, because he has not ships enough, and tens of thousands of tons of war material, steel and explosives can not be shipped on account of shortage of cargo space. Of such cases, there are as many as one chooses to quote. The falling off in arrivals and departures is also an important matter. Counting by thousands of net registered tons entering and clearing English ports, the following table is submitted:

1916	Entered	Cleared
July.....	2781	3138
August.....	2783	3214
September.....	2505	3113
October.....	2469	3027
November.....	2555	2673

The sessions of Parliament and the newspapers as well are filled with discussions which at once express the fear of a continued and fatal falling off in shipping travel as well as the passionate longing to have the government take effective charge of the situation. According to English custom, the newspapers publish long columns of letters coming from leading men, ad-

mirals, shipping men, and politicians, to similar effect. Danger lurks, gaze where the British may. As indicative of the general feeling, I call attention to the session in the House of Lords of the 15th of November, in which Lord Sydenham made the "serious crisis" the thesis of a debate which caused a great deal of attention, and likewise to the fact of the demand made upon the government by Lord Beresford to come out with a statement as to what it proposed to do with regard to German U-boats.

With regard to this general subject, public opinion was not without its spokesmen. The most important of the proposals made was announced some time since September, voicing the thought that found its expression in the slogan "ton for ton." The British Merchant Fleet Association, the chambers of commerce, and latterly, for instance, even the English chambers of commerce in China, demanded that Germany be informed that for every ton sunk, that is to say (and on this point there was some lack of unanimity), at least for every ton of freight space which, according to the English view of international law, was sunk in violation thereof, Germany would have to make good, ton for ton, from her own resources; for the idea was that Germany would allow herself to be intimidated in this way and would hold back her U-boats. Others were less sanguine with regard to the result of such a threat. In any event, the proposal shows plainly that people were by no means confident of the efficiency of the positive measures of defense which had been adopted.

The demand to arm all the merchant ships and, in the bargain, with the heaviest pieces possible, seemed to promise better results. This has been undertaken times without number, and is constantly being put into practice to the greatest extent possible. In this connection, particular attention was called to the danger consisting in the increased efficiency area, the increased rapidity and the stronger armaments of the German U-boats. Insurance companies reported that armed ships were called upon to pay smaller premiums than unarmed vessels. From other sources came the assertion that, on account of shortage in material, it would be impossible to carry out the policy of a general arming of the merchant ships.

What could be done to meet the shortage in tonnage?

4. Congestion at the ports

The difficulty has been very materially increased by delay in getting ships ready for clearance. The "congestion at the ports" has ever since November been the constant cry in the reports of the newspapers. It is again and again announced from England and from Liverpool how long ships are held up in port. And particularly are these complaints lodged against France. In his speech of November 15, in the lower house, Minister Runciman complained very seriously of the fact that in this way from 160 to 170 ships were made inactive in the French ports; an amount of cargo space which

may be set at about 500,000 tons. The reason is mainly to be found in the shortage of labor and in the overcrowding of the trade routes which the army transports have left open for the transportation of commodities. It is unlikely that any material improvement in the situation will come with time, all the more so because these complaints are constantly being renewed and, in spite of the crying need which exists, it has been found thus far impossible to put a stop to them.

5. *New ships*

The question of new ships has been made the subject of public discussions far and wide. According to Lloyd's reports, the English fleet has increased since the beginning of 1914 by the following amounts of gross registered tonnage in newly built vessels:

	1914	1915	1916
1st quarter.....	429,000	267,000	80,000
2d ".....	439,000	148,000	157,000
3d ".....	375,000	146,000	192,000
4th ".....	416,000	93,000

With regard to the war period, these numbers create a certain lack of confidence, in so far as they justify the suspicion that they include a certain number of vessels which have left the ways before being ready and placed in commission. But, taken as they stand, these figures prove that the number of new ships is wholly insufficient. Attention has been drawn to the grave fact that the new ships of the year 1915, roughly numbered at 650,000 tons, fall short of the ordinary depreciation in shipping by 100,000 tons, not including war losses. From the middle of this year on, a certain improvement seemed to have taken place. Minister Runciman called attention to the fact on the 15th of November that he saw no reason why, at the end of 1916, a figure of 500,000 tons in newly constructed ships should not be reached for the second half-year of 1916; this would mean new ships to the extent of over 300,000 tons for the last quarter. According to the opinion of technical periodicals, this announcement must be looked upon as altogether too optimistic. There is neither labor nor material enough in the dock yards, but above all else the needs of the Navy require practically all the facilities which the dock-yards have at their command.

6. *Prohibition against the importation of dispensable commodities*

As early as February, 1916, the policy was adopted of prohibiting the importation of dispensable commodities; partly on financial grounds, but also in order to leave cargo space available. A list of the embargoed imports, which seriously affects bulky goods of many kinds, is no small one.¹ We have not been able to ascertain how this relieved the situation. It is the great masses of indispensable commodities which are profitably booked for

¹ The list is in possession of the Admiralty Staff.

cargo space. For this reason, no material benefit is expected to result from further embargoes on imports.

7. *The taking over of shipping commerce by the State*

As in the case of supplying the country with foodstuff, the government was requested to take over full control of the shipping trade. The government has constantly refused to accede to this request, if such accession meant that the whole merchant fleet should be administered by the government like one consolidated shipping concern. But aside from this, those measures which the British government has already taken amount, as Minister Runciman announced on the 17th of October in the House of Commons, for all practical purposes, to a very comprehensive control. He announced that there were only 1,118 English ships which were not subject to this control; those 297 ships already referred to on page 267¹ are included in this number which are constantly engaged in foreign parts, whereas the remaining 821 ships operate at times as liners and at times as tramp steamers in the service of transporting commodities between England and other countries, but are not under the obligation of sailing under the orders of the government. These ships, which amount to little more than 10 per cent of the total British cargo space, were characterized by the Minister as a mere skeleton of the peace organization of British shipping, which would have to be kept intact for national reasons. All remaining ships sail, to all intents and purposes, in accordance with the sailing instructions given out by the government from time to time, that is, in so far as they are not actually under requisition. Mr. Runciman, who himself is a shipping man, is recognized even by his political opponents in England as one who knows the needs and conditions of the shipping business. For the rest, the fact is that, even if these 821 ships were brought under government control, this would result in no material benefit to the British trade in commodities in which they are already engaged. But let us assume that it would be possible to call in to the English trade even the greater part of the 297 ships which are engaged in different fields and which were estimated above to amount to some 450,000 gross registered tonnage, nothing really decisive would result therefrom; all the less so, as a matter of fact, since neutral shipping could find nothing more to its own advantage than to step into those trade routes freed from English freight control, and in this way the trade with England would lose exactly as much benefit in the way of neutral shipping as it could gain by the use of its own additional ships. For the rest, the ships in question are engaged in the main for the purposes of the British colonies and are absolutely indispensable in this regard.

8. *The effects of the unrestricted U-boat war*

So much with regard to English ocean commerce and cargo space. The question now before us is to try to obtain a picture of the results which an unrestricted U-boat war would have upon the present situation.

¹ This print, p. 1247.

I am proceeding upon the premise of the 600,000 tons gross register already furnished at the beginning of this year, which would fall victim to the U-boats each month. It is not necessary for me to set out the details upon which this calculation is based; it is reached on the basis of the experience of the time that has passed since February, 1915. I shall assume, in order to proceed cautiously, that the increased sinkings which will result from having an increased number of boats at our disposal will be equalized by improved methods of defense on the part of our opponents. The figure of 600,000 tons is based on the premise that the number of ships plying to and from English ports will not be diminished to an altogether disproportionate extent; if these losses should occur in considerable numbers, then the list of ships which are sunk will diminish proportionately to the diminution in the number of objects to be attacked. By way of exercising extreme caution, I will therefore calculate on a monthly sinking of 500,000 tons from the fifth month on.

It is not that the U-boats are limited to the destruction of commercial commodities destined to England alone; a certain proportion of their booty consists of ships bound for France or Italy, or ships not in the service of the transportation of commodities. For this reason, it is not necessary to allow for a deduction, because, as matters stand today, England must replace the cargo space which it is holding for other purposes or which is plying on the French or Italian courses over those parts of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean which are subject to U-boat attacks, from her own resources unless she is willing to sacrifice and lose her allies, who are already being pressed to the utmost.

Moreover, it can certainly be assumed that a considerable portion of neutral shipping will be frightened away from further intercourse with England by sea. This will involve at least 50 per cent; and, as a matter of fact, immediately, if the unrestricted U-boat war is launched unexpectedly and carried on with ruthless energy (I shall return to this point later). The traffic in the North Sea will, so far as Holland is concerned, from Zeebrugge as a basis, be subjected not only to the attacks of the U-boats, but also to those of the other fighting factors of the fleet.

The reasons why I believe that intimidation will bring about such results are to be found in the situation which will confront the shipping corporations. He who is acquainted with the shipping business knows perfectly well that, once a ruthless U-boat warfare is launched, the end of the war will be brought in sight. The shipping concerns will not and can not venture in such case to subject their ships to an increase of peril; for, even if the insurance companies pay them back in money the value of their ships that have been lost, the foundation of their business fortunes will be destroyed without any prospect of replacing lost cargo space, in view of the general ship famine. This would mean a tie-up in the shipping business right at the time following the war when it would give promise of unusual activity and of unusual profits.

Experience has shown us that the raids which have been carried on in the last few weeks from Zeebrugge, and even the capture of a single ship like that of the *Koningen Regente* has led to a tie-up in the Holland-English sea traffic, the effects of which the British have been able to overcome only with difficulty. Developments which have taken place in the business of marine insurance gives us another proof. The premiums for voyages which were particularly subjected to the operations of the U-boats increased at once by many times their value, as in the case of the Mediterranean and also at the time of the raid made by the U-53 upon Atlantic commerce. In October, the Norwegians simply refused to insure the ships of their own country any longer, so that England had to meet the situation herself. The premium for enemy ships is higher than for neutral ships. And at least just as important is the intimidating effect of the ruthless U-boat war upon the crews. England has found herself obliged to adopt a policy of imposing serious penalties upon members of crews who refuse to live up to their contracts in cases where the question was one of travel in dangerous areas. Of course, in the case of neutrals, such steps are of no avail. It has been observed that, when the U-boat war of February, 1915, was commenced, neutral ship traffic was tied up for a considerable length of time and was only resumed when it was made plain that Germany would spare neutral ships. The same thing happened later on. On October 10 the correspondent of the *Morning Post* in Christiania announced that, as the result of the activity of the German U-boats, steamer traffic from Norway to the Murman coast was discontinued.

Basing what I have to say on figures which, in order to insure against an over-statement, are under the estimates formed by the Army, I will assume that only three quarters of the Danish and Swedish shipping, and only one half of the Dutch, Spanish and Greek shipping, and only a sixth of the Norwegian shipping, will be frightened off from the dangerous trade routes; and in this connection we must bear in mind that the craft of the North Sea are very generally not adapted to a change over to ocean routes. I will further assume that those ships which are plying between the United States and England will continue in the English trade. In this case, the neutral tonnage which will have been frightened off will be in all 1,200,000 tons, taken from a total neutral tonnage of 3 millions engaged in English traffic. In other words, I will assume that no more than 40 per cent of neutral shipping will be prevented by intimidation from taking part in the traffic in question.

If, according to this, we desire to get a picture of the effects of a ruthless U-boat war upon the traffic with England, we must, in the same way as was done on page 266,¹ obtain the amount of cargo space plying between England and other ports, from the statistics on ocean traffic which we have before us. For ocean traffic is merely a function of tonnage which changes from month

¹ This print, p. 1246.

to month, while tonnage itself, however, is the constant sum-total by which the amount of sea traffic is for the time being to be determined in proportion to the extent to which this sum total will be affected by the U-boat war. $6\frac{3}{4}$ million tons of British cargo space, 900,000 tons of enemy cargo space in addition thereto, and around 3 million tons of neutral cargo space, all in all amounting to $10\frac{3}{4}$ million tons gross register, touch at English ports.¹ This tonnage makes it possible, based on the average for the months July–September, 1916, for the carrying on of a monthly sea traffic with England amounting to 6,140,000 tons. After four months, as the result of ships sunk and of intimidation by virtue of a ruthless U-boat war, this amount would fall off to about 4 million tons, after five months to $3\frac{3}{4}$ millions, or after four months by $33\frac{1}{2}$ per cent and after five months by 39 per cent.

The question of whether England, in such case, would be in a position to reinforce to a material extent the fleet which is now operating along commercial lines by tonnage which is being used for other purposes, calls for consideration. In other words, the question is whether it would be possible to release from their military duties and to any material extent, ships which had been subjected to requisition. In his two great speeches in the House of Commons on the question of providing food supply, made on the 15th and 16th of November, Minister Runciman, not for the first time, but with increased emphasis, expressed himself freely on the question of requisitions, and complained of the extent to which the military authorities had, with a high hand, availed themselves of all the economic resources afforded by existing cargo space. It would seem that no change of importance can be brought about along these lines. Not that many ships which are now operating as auxiliary cruisers could not, perhaps, under powerful pressure, be given up. Looked at on the whole, however, it must be taken as settled from the technical standpoint of the Navy, that the unrestricted U-boat war will bring England to such a pass that, speaking from the view-point of tactics, she will need, not less, but rather more ships for military purposes. The service of security and information will at once need to be materially reinforced. The invasion of the Atlantic by the German war element makes it out of the question to attempt to limit military forces which are already there.

The giving up of the Saloniki project might come to mind in this connection, as the result of which, it must be admitted, a very material amount of tonnage would be released, which would out-number what would be sunk in a month's time by the unrestricted U-boat war. But it must be borne in mind in this connection that giving up the Saloniki project would have results far different from the withdrawal from Gallipoli at the time that this last occurred. If the Entente leaves Saloniki in the lurch, this means the complete renunciation of the Near East as a theater of war, the inevitable

¹ Note 4, *post*, p. 1276

opening of communications between the Central Powers and Turkey, the sacrifice of Serbia, the renunciation of the policy with regard to Greece carried on with such great effort, the surrender of the war aims with regard to Russia which have been so solemnly announced, and, what perhaps would be the most vital thing for England, the giving up of any further effort to protect Egypt and the Suez Canal on the flanks. Should the Allies really come to such a resolution, it would mean a success for the unrestricted U-boat war which would certainly not be too dearly paid for by the added delay of another month, and which would certainly not remain without an unfavorable effect upon Italy. And judging from the military point of view, it is indeed difficult to see how the war material which was transported to Saloniki can be brought back in safety on shipboard; and that, further, the retransportation of men and material could only be accomplished in the face of extraordinary danger, in view of the immense amount of tonnage required therefor.

I now have to meet the objection that the political results of an unrestricted U-boat warfare would be likely to provide England with the German tonnage of about 650,000 tons now lying at anchor in the United States, perhaps, too, German shipping in South American States amounting to a further 700,000 tons (including sailing vessels), and with these the vessels which are now in Norwegian ports, in other words, 1,400,000 tons in all. This objection is not sound. In the first place, it can not be assumed that all these ships would be delivered to England, in view of the shortage in cargo space all over the world. It is essential that, as has been provided for, the greatest part of those ships be made unseaworthy. It took six months for those German ships which had been taken over by the Portuguese government in March, 1916, to be made seaworthy once more. And again, quite aside from such injuries, the conversion of the passenger steamers in the United States to freight steamers would be a condition precedent to their being placed in service. Moreover, officers and crews would have to be found for these ships; and this is a matter which would be difficult, and which would take a great deal of time, since everywhere, and above all in the United States, there is a general crew shortage. In any event, only a small portion of these ships would take part in the ocean traffic to England, and even this would come about very gradually and tardily.

I desire to call attention briefly to a matter of technical interest to the Navy. The concentrating of freight steamers in large numbers on unusually dangerous routes such as, for instance, the route from the Canary islands to England, and to have them accompanied by war vessels, holds out the promise of practically no success at all. In the first place, it would result in a very unusual consumption of time and also in a corresponding diminution of tonnage available for use, if a large number of ships were instructed to concentrate at a particular place in the ocean at a particular time. More-

over, for freight steamers to travel in groups is, particularly in heavy weather, a matter of such difficulty that the vessels would necessarily have to steam at such considerable intervals that far more war craft than England is prepared to spare for the purpose would be required to protect them. And finally, convoys such as these would be a most welcome sight for the U-boats, because, on account of the ground they would cover, it is not possible to render them even approximately secure from attack, and because, further, they must travel just as slowly as the rate of progress made by the engines of the slowest steamer in the convoy.

Finally, I call attention to the fact, for the sake of completeness, that England is not in a position to meet the results of an unrestricted U-boat war by some such measure as a possible detour made by a portion of the shipping carrying its imports, in such a fashion that, say, they can be brought to Marseilles or to the western ports of France and thence by rail to the Channel coast. In the first place, the ocean will be declared a war area along the west coast of France, and the U-boat war will be carried on here just as it is along the French coast of the Mediterranean. But above all, the French railroad system and the French Channel ports are already overcrowded to such a degree that they simply can not handle further imports to any appreciable extent. I think I may refrain from repeating at length the French reports which we have before us, and I can, rather, refer to the report of the chief of the military railway system (Staff No. 838) of December 9, 1916. It is perfectly obvious that the necessary additions to the French railroads, and the necessary increase in their cars could not possibly be constructed during the months of the U-boat war.

I now return to the figures which I have given as representing the effect of the unrestricted U-boat war after four or five months. They only give the bare figures of the results which are expected. But this picture requires further comment in the way of practical details in order to make it perfectly clear on the question of results.

England gets 60 per cent of its butter from Denmark and its butter-fat imports practically entirely from Holland. If the former should fall entirely away and the latter only by 50 per cent, England would at once find herself face to face with a famine in fats. In peace time, England imported more than two thirds of its necessary supply of butter, and a half of this has already fallen off during the course of the war. It has up to the present time been substituted by the importation of butter-fats up to nearly twice the amount.

Denmark, moreover, provides a quarter of the bacon which is imported to England, and from one third to one half of the imports in eggs; Holland imports considerable amounts of cheese, mutton and pork.

The fish catch and the importation of fish would fall far below the present amount.

Attention has been called to the extent to which the imports of grains into England already in a shaky condition, can be affected. In spite of a possible system of food control, the imports from the southern hemisphere will require far more tonnage than all the imports from the United States up to this time, and this increase will have to be brought about at least during the U-boat war. If the shortage in feed becomes greater, the English cattle-raising industry will collapse:

As regards raw material, the Swedish metal imports would fall off to an overwhelming extent, the imports from Spain, which constitutes the chief market, would be noticeably decreased, and this in face of the fact that raw materials for the munitions industry are already very hard to get. To the same effect, ship-building will suffer, and the ship-builders will find themselves less and less able to make up for the losses of war.

Almost 25 per cent of the British imports in wood, the significance of which, particularly in connection with the coal mining industry, has already been referred to, come from Sweden.

If there is a shortage in the importation of cotton, the matter of employment in connection with the most important of English industries will come to grief, and the difficulties in the labor question will also start from this angle.

English finance will stand and fall on the question of the English export trade.

From another standpoint, it is of the utmost importance that the American importations of war material and war stuffs for the purposes of the British munitions industry be from now on struck hard, and, using Zeebrugge as a base, military transports will be attacked in the Channel, and we shall be able to sink numerous transports in the Mediterranean which up to the present time we have been obliged to spare on account of the risk of confusing them with passenger ships.

It is in connection with such methods of attack upon British commerce, to outstanding types of which I have made reference, that the British traffic upon the sea can be overthrown. A sea-faring people like the British will not only be hard hit so far as directly interested shipping circles are concerned, by the infliction of so paralyzing a blow against its merchant fleet as is imminent. The way in which former losses have been received makes this obvious. It is well known in England that the country's power and greatness and therewith its commercial situation before the world can not be maintained without the predominating influence of its merchant fleet, and people are feeling in England that this predominance is imminently threatened. England will not be able to permit the inroads made upon its fleet to increase so tremendously from month to month.

Add to this the effect which it will have upon the Englishman to see his imports from overseas threatened. The dweller upon the Continent can

only with difficulty conceive what a vital question this is for the Islander. The moment he sees that imports and exports are being cut off to a perilous extent, his power of resistance will be put to a proof which he has not experienced up to this time and which, in so far as it is permitted to human judgment to determine, he is not strong enough to bear. The result will be general panic, with its concomitant effects upon trade, prices and the entire public.

By way of proof, let me point to the effects as they have been described as occurring at the beginning of the U-boat war of 1915 and of the spring of 1916, and which manifested themselves in spite of the comparatively small amount of shipping sunk. I recall, too, the tremendous effect which was felt all over England after the sinking of the *Lusitania* and which led to a complete change in the British policy.

This psychological effect upon the Englishman is, in my estimation, of no less importance than the direct result upon imports. I consider it pertinent to indulge in an assumption in this regard. England's constant experience in this war has been that a U-boat war undertaken by the German Government, launched under conditions which gave great promise of dangerous potentialities, was from the outset subjected to restrictions which at once gave rise to the question of whether any definite results could be obtained, and that objections raised by foreign Powers sooner or later brought it to a close. The existence of a doubt as to whether or not it was to be carried on in dead earnest on this occasion would cripple the effect upon the English mind. This can only be avoided *if the war is launched immediately upon the heels of the announcement of an unrestricted U-boat war against enemy shipping and if, moreover, the unrestricted war is conducted against neutral shipping in the war areas, coming again as closely as possible on the heels of an announcement to that effect, so that only those ships will be spared which, after they have left their ports of clearance, are so situated that they can by no means whatsoever receive instructions as to the actual launching of the U-boat war; and if there is provided no opportunity for negotiations which could leave room for the hope that this time, too, the chance of showing what really could be accomplished would be taken away. If we proceed along this line, then and then only will those engaged in the shipping trade, the English people and the neutral Powers, be in the grip of that fear which guarantees the success of the unrestricted U-boat war. I confidently expect this success within a period of five months at the longest. The success obtained will be such as to incline England to accept a useful peace.*

Up to the present time, I have set out the effects which I expect will result from the unrestricted U-boat war. For the purposes of comparison, I call attention to the fact that if, in spite of the continued arming of the enemy merchant ships, it can be assumed that the U-boat war on commerce will continue its sinkings amounting to 400,000 tons a month, this would cause losses to English sea traffic of about 15 per cent in the course of four months

and of about $18\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in five months. It would be impossible for me to assume that such results would be of such a nature as to affect England sufficiently deeply to bring about the state of mind essential to make possible a peace which we could accept; all the less so, since the conduct of the U-boat war on commerce carries with it the ever-present danger of sinking ships unwittingly which, according to the conception of the United States, should not be sunk, thereby continually involving us in new differences with the United States, and at the same time providing renewed opportunities for England to nourish the hope that even this type of U-boat war on commerce would be done away with. In this way, the psychological effect would in the main be dissipated. The release of armed steamers would, so far as experience has shown up to this time, probably suffice to equalize the drop in sinkings by the U-boats resulting from the continued arming of English merchant ships, and the constant increase in the development of defensive measures; on the other hand, it would scarcely lead to a noticeable increase over the 400,000 tons of monthly sinkings.

C. THE QUESTION OF POLITICS

The Admiralty Staff can not rest satisfied with merely showing that England can produce nothing in the way of a real obstacle against the effect of the unrestricted U-boat war and that she would be prostrated by it within an appreciable period of time. For this proof can not be allowed to hang in air, but (as is made plain by the very fact that German ships are laid up at the docks of neutrals), must be discussed on the basis of all those considerations for or against the U-boat question, if the decision is to be final and is to be accounted for before our own conscience. For this purpose, those authorities within whose competence the conduct of war upon the sea is placed, are necessary. If for this reason, I undertake to submit those more far-reaching considerations which come within the field of political administration, it is, none the less, far from my intention to encroach upon the competence and responsibilities of the highest political branch. On the contrary, my only desire is, in accordance with my duty, to announce my convictions with regard to the complex whole of the fundamental questions involved.

These questions involve at one and the same time the direct and influential results of the U-boat war upon the course and termination of the war. My first task is to set out in detail the effect which the breaking-off of diplomatic negotiations and the declaration of war by the United States would have. It is simply a question of establishing whether, and to what extent, the United States would be able to prevent the success of the U-boat weapon.

Such assistance as the United States could give to the Entente might be considered first in the form of putting troops at its disposal which might be concentrated as volunteers, and in considerable number, too, in the United

States—a circumstance which we must not consider outside the realms of possibility. But the situation is different when we come to the question of training them up to the point of meeting the requirements which present-day war conditions call for. The conditions over there are not such as are suitable for such training operations. The history of the Spanish War of 1898 is instructive regarding what an American army can do and what it can not do. After all, the decisive question is that of transportation. One has flippantly spoken of “hundreds of thousands” of American volunteers whom we must take into consideration. On the other hand, we must bear in mind that, reckoning closely, 400,000 gross registered tons of shipping are required to transport 100,000 soldiers without horses, vehicles or other equipment than the equipment which is carried on the person, in the course of one month from the United States to France. If we take into consideration the time which it would take in any case to make a hundred thousand men even barely useful in warfare, it is readily seen that, as the result of the question of transportation alone, any appreciable reinforcement of the hostile armies by means of American troops is out of the question.

Just as unfounded are the fears that the Entente may be able to receive far greater supplies of ammunition from the United States than has been the case heretofore. The organization of the American iron industry—an organization encouraged politically and of forced growth resulting from the extraordinary demands made upon it, as well as extraordinary profits acquired, which has otherwise been rendered fallow by the World War—has already, if all credible sources of information on the subject are to be believed, reached the limit of its capacity in the pursuit of its purpose, to wit, the providing of ammunition for the Entente, in the course of which it has exhausted all possible sources of production within reach. The prices of iron and steel have already reached a height in the United States which has resulted in an unsatisfied domestic demand. On the other hand, the unrestricted U-boat war would make available for the Navy the very welcome opportunity of sinking shipments of ammunition, which up to the present time have come over in ships which were not open to attack, in this way bringing the Army that relief which is so earnestly desired. The appearance of a U-boat on the American coast has shown the Americans what is awaiting them at their very gates if need be.

Finally, the United States will lose the opportunity of sending their war material to Europe with their former recklessness, if they find themselves bound up in the war tangle. Then it is that the point of view of self-preservation will thrust itself into the foreground. If the United States becomes a party to this war, this will make it all the more impossible for them to shut their eyes to the Japanese peril, particularly in view of the cabinet change in Tokyo, and with the possibility of the prospect of a still quicker and sharper advance of the Japanese in China. Nor will they be able to be oblivious to

the effect which will be created upon the active currents in Japan, if they get rid of their war material in excessive doses. It looks even now as if the United States were already becoming more conservative in their shipment of ammunition.

Assistance by the United States in other lines, those of finance, is often described as important. It is true that the United States would be in the position of coming to the rescue of the Entente with materially greater loans than before, if the nation itself and the war spirit of the whole people could be set in motion.

But the significance of such support must be estimated correctly. In this connection, we must differentiate between the national budget and the credit balance. England's budget, that is, the relation between its income and its enormously increased financial burden, would be relieved by the entrance of the United States into the war as an ally, if this were to result in releasing England from payments which, up to such time, were to be made. This would be the case if this assistance were to take the form, not of further loans, but of subsidies without the obligation of returns, whether in the form of actual payments, or paper, or in the form of gratuitous deliveries of war material. But there is nothing upon which to base this supposition. It would be opposed to the American conception of economics; it would touch the country which has just been suffering under the effects of a crop failure in grainstuffs and in wool, on the one tender spot out of particular consideration for which it has been able to save itself, even during the conditions of the World War, from being crippled commercially, and to make up for the results of those long years of unfavorable opportunities which preceded the war; even now, the enhancement of prices in the United States is extreme, and labor conditions, particularly on account of the lack of immigration during the war, have become critical; there would be a sudden interruption to that course of development which is changing the financial status of the United States from that of a debtor nation to a creditor nation, which is replacing London by New York, and which is bound to result in giving the country an influential position among the great Powers, and is using the greatest financial power in the world as a stepping-stone.

So far as the credit balance is concerned, we would have to take it for granted that England would receive from her ally, the United States, the loans necessary for the payment for imports in greater amounts than before, and that she would be more certain to get them, and that she would perhaps get them under more favorable conditions. We must not underestimate the effect of these facilitations. But they would be entitled to decisive weight only in case England were otherwise in danger of not being able to conclude the loans which she needs in order to pay her foreign debts and in this way to make it possible for her to undertake new obligations. This danger does not exist. Of course the fact is not to be ignored that the British govern-

ment has very serious difficulties to meet in order to maintain her credit balance, particularly with the United States. For the purpose of securing the American loans, enormous amounts are being withdrawn from the British treasury, consisting of the best foreign paper, and the national wealth of England is suffering very materially thereby; the interest rate of 6 per cent for the newest issue of British treasury notes constitutes a heavy burden and means loss of standing for English finance, even though this rate of interest, which had to be adapted to the possibilities of having the paper in question taken up in foreign countries, can not be for a moment compared with that of the German war loans, which only had to reckon on the domestic market and on its spirit of self-sacrifice. That the sale of British and French treasury notes in the United States failed as the result of the warning issued by the Federal Reserve Board, was a severe blow for English finances. But it all comes down to the one point, and that is the recognition of the fact that we are not to assume that England will be forced to consider peace within a determinable period because of an impossibility of being able to incur new obligations in foreign countries. The financial strength of England and the interest of the United States in its chief debtor are too great to permit this. Further, the colonies, too, are coming to the financial support of the mother country and are enabled to do so through their considerable participation in war deliveries. Developments in war times teach us that new measures and new roads are constantly being discovered, leading to the disclosure of unexpected financial resources, over and above every earlier experience. And it is just this which makes it impossible for us to state in advance the exact point of time at which it will become impossible for the British to continue to finance the war. It will at least be possible for her to do so as long as England is able to convince her friends that she will ultimately be victorious.

In whatever light, however, we care to consider these points, *the outstanding feature is the impossibility of forming any comparison between the financial support of England by the United States and the effects of the U-boat war. Loans, credits, payments, and everything having a bearing on this field will be of no avail if imports are cut off from a country. The shortage to which it will then be exposed will not be relieved by gold or its equivalent. For these reasons, we may lay aside any further consideration of any American peril emanating from this source.*

This danger would appear to warrant more serious consideration on the side of the direct effect which is ascribed to it; that is, the reaction upon those European States which have thus far remained neutral; in a word, Holland and Denmark. The possibility must always be kept in view, quite aside from the question of the influence that America's action may have, of England's exerting such pressure upon those countries by stopping all imports by water as to force them to absolutely close their frontiers to Ger-

many or actually to go to war with her. As was the case in the September conferences at the General Headquarters, here too I can limit myself to Holland and Denmark, because these are the countries from which we have received very considerable and current imports during the past and which, moreover, in their capacity as contiguous nations, are in the position of constituting a direct war menace so far as we are concerned.

The falling-off of the German crops of this fall, and particularly of the potato crop, is not such as to make us indifferent to the possibility of imports from foreign countries. It is true that our situation has been somewhat relieved by the occupation of Wallachia. Moreover, ever since last summer, a marked falling-off in the imports from Holland and Denmark has been noticeable. The fact is that the English pressure has been very greatly increased. The Lloyd George ministry has shown a fundamental advance along this line. With this ministry, the tendency has gained prominence which always reproached the former cabinet with too much leniency toward the neutrals. And, as matters last stood, this policy had already proceeded so far as to leave little else to be done. The extension of the law of contraband to commodities of every kind and, even to all those commodities destined to Germany by way of neutral territory or to commodities coming from there; the manner in which the right of visit was exercised against neutral ships which came into English ports under stress of circumstances and, when there, had to meet every request; the refusal of bunker coal, which according to latest official announcements is to be made effective in the case of all neutral vessels which are not sailing in the interests of the Entente; the rationing of neutral countries, based on their national needs before the war, supported by a fine-toothed system of commercial espionage and by the black lists—all these measures have so far influenced the neutral Powers that they have even applied their penal statutes to the service of shutting off any traffic in commodities to Germany, to such an extent that, to take an example, Denmark has submitted to the cessation of its traffic with Iceland; in a word, if we make an exception of Sweden, the neutral Powers have been docile all the way through. In any case, we must realize that a complete blockade of Denmark and Holland will come about within a determinable time even in the absence of the U-boat war.

The reason for this attitude on the part of the neutral Powers is to be found in the overwhelming significance of the British dominion of the seas, and not only in this, but also in the different points of view which have come to be entertained by the neutral Powers with regard to the policy which is to be expected from both England and Germany. On the part of the British, there was made apparent the calculated, continuing and consistent policy of arbitrarily taking advantage of such resources as lay at hand and which did not allow itself to be retarded by any protest of any kind; whereas on the part of Germany was made manifest a willingness to

make concessions to the protests of the United States against giving our most powerful weapon a fair trial as soon as it bade fair to become a menace. The hand of England was readily discernible in the matter of this American protest. I am far from inclined to criticise Germany's policy by the establishment of these facts, but powerful as may have been the reasons therefor which were based on an examination of the entire political situation of the war, it is nevertheless true that the neutral naturally looked upon matters from his own standpoint, and hence perhaps from one side only. And in so doing, he was forced to come to the conclusion that he had far more to fear from England than he had from Germany. For the weakling, this is the controlling factor. And so I come to a point which is, in my opinion, decisive.

The defense of Germany against the overwhelming numbers of her enemies is a tremendous task. But the public opinion of the world does not base its judgments on fine distinctions—it uses actual consequences and, above all, consequences which take the form of personal experiences. If Germany fails when she still has time to shift her helm and to teach the neutral Powers that she is in no wise behind England in the matter of determination and in the power which she exercises, the result will be a very serious danger, not only for the present, but for the future as well. To avoid it, the unrestricted U-boat war is the only means at our disposal. This war will turn the tables and carry the trade war into the enemy's country. It will result in a quick change of front on the part of the neutrals as to where the superior strength of will and capacity to perform lie.

And this is the point of view on which we must depend for the determination of the question of whether we are justified in apprehending that Denmark and Holland will be forced into the enemy's camp as the result of the pressure of England and the United States. Both countries are in no way to be compared, from a military standpoint, with the Powers which are participating in this war. They have little or absolutely nothing to gain from being dragged into the war, and, on the contrary, everything to lose. The example of Roumania deters them. Copenhagen and traffic between the Danish Isles and the Continent lies within range of the guns of our fleet; and the fleet itself makes any attack on the part of Denmark positively out of the question; and in like manner will Holland expose her territory to destruction if the defense of her country makes it necessary to flood it. It is the military situation in Europe, not the attitude of the United States, which is far from the center of activities, which is the determining factor for both countries. These factors, common to both war and politics, are of greater moment than the prospect of living close for a number of months if imports by sea are shut off from both these countries. And, moreover, in this connection the situation of both States does not appear to me as promising anything desperate. With regard to Holland (leaving to one side other

communications), I may refer to a report of the Imperial Legation at The Hague of the 30th of October, 1916, copy of which I received from the Foreign Office, and according to which Holland is provided with grainstuffs for a period of from four to six months. Denmark, too, can keep her head above water for a considerable time, as I have been informed by reports on this subject. Both countries will be placed in an uncomfortable situation; but they will both have to take measures which will enable them to weather the storm. The adoption of measures looking toward taking over from them at good prices those foodstuffs which up to the present time have gone to England would be helpful in this contingency. The chief point is this: the necessity on their part of being obliged to hoard their resources will not be sufficient to induce them to declare war in the face of a war conducted under the conditions which characterize ruthless U-boat warfare, and which gives prospect of the end of the struggle within a determinable period. How these countries will solve the problems brought into being by the above situation will be a matter for them, not us, to decide.

I can not refrain from emphasizing once more in this connection the necessity of having the conduct of the unrestricted U-boat war follow immediately upon the heels of its announcement, without giving our opponents time to carry out any counter-measures. If the effect of the U-boat war makes itself felt unexpectedly, then I have no doubt at all that the neutral Powers will await in silence the outcome of the battle of the giants, the terrible seriousness of which will be portrayed before their eyes; yes, perhaps the unexpected may happen, and even the United States will feel some hesitation about entering into this conflict, with regard to the dangers of which she is thoroughly informed. On the other hand, the entrance of the United States would be almost a necessity if time were to elapse between the announcement and the conduct of the U-boat war, the effect of which would be to challenge the United States to a definite and responsible announcement of her attitude.

This train of thought carries us on to the last fundamental conception on which our war policy will have to embark.

The war must come to an end. It has already lasted too long for Germany. The frightful loss of life is already such as to justify a feeling of anxiety for our future development; in the course of working out the inevitable tasks of reconstruction and exploitation of our commercial relations in peace time, those who have fallen, who in the bloom of their youth constituted the most vital forces of the nation, will represent a loss for Germany which it will be difficult to fill. The economic resources of the country are becoming more and more emasculated. We are lacking in man-power, raw material, machinery; we must build up anew untold trades and occupations; the apparently healthy condition of widespread circles of industry must not be allowed to deceive us with regard to the general situation. Our financial

burdens have increased to such a degree as to justify the doubt whether the sums necessary to gradually meet the payment of principal and interest are such as to leave us the possibility of developing upon further commercial lines. Our people are for the most part tired out; it is a question as to whether we can expect such a moral uplift resulting from the return of soldiers from the field as was expected a year ago, particularly if they are distributed among those who have remained at home. The vacillation in the attitude of the Social Democrats is not such as to encourage an optimistic outlook. It would be wrong to underestimate the menace of such a situation, now slumbering in the depths. But all the same, an improvement in prospects may be expected if our war policy finally takes a vigorous turn for the better; this would mean a vigorous impetus which would be felt by the whole people.

If we direct our view toward the outside world, it becomes plain that our opponents have lost no time in cutting off our relations with the rest of the world. In the countries of our enemies, every seed that has been planted by German effort, as well as the resulting fruits thereof, are being extirpated, root and branch. Our transoceanic relations with neutral Powers are wearing away as the result of long disuse; it will be difficult to renew them. The United States and Japan have taken over many a locality heretofore under German occupation. Without productive exports, without export trade and without ocean traffic, Germany can not endure.

An end must be put to this situation. How else shall this be brought about? We are not justified in expecting victory on land to the extent of a favorable political decision against our principal enemies. There is insufficient ground for the conclusion that our enemies will collapse within a determinable period.

I can not bring myself to apprehend that perhaps the unrestricted U-boat war, as such, will influence our relations with the rest of the States to an extent that can not be cured, not even excepting the case of the United States. Hatred and bitterness which the war has produced are least of all to be overcome by making concessions or manifesting consideration for others. But respect may help us where a friendly attitude is lacking. The success of the strong man has really always been the element before which the world has bowed its head. Moreover, the complaints of our opponents against our method of conducting war on the ocean are without foundation; the new international law which has been brought into being by the U-boat provides its own lines of conduct; just as England has laid the foundations of a new law of the sea under the spur of the necessity of the new conditions of sea warfare, without having had to face any material opposition in the process.

We can meet the hypocritical arguments which speak of suffering humanity with the remark that it is indeed far more inhuman to sacrifice additional

hundreds of thousands of German nationals for the purpose of sparing an infinitesimal number of seamen who, in spite of all warnings, hasten on to their doom. Every drop of German blood which has been unnecessarily shed will be paid for by him who might have avoided its loss.

It might well be otherwise if the unrestricted U-boat war could be looked upon as the preliminary step of a war of conquest. Such a misinterpretation has been made impossible ever since the magnanimous peace move on the part of His Majesty the Emperor. By force of this move, we have been placed in the position of having manifested our desire for peace and our consequent intention, not to take advantage of victory to the extent of thereby menacing the conditions essential to the very existence of our enemies.

If it is true that England considers the maintenance of her dominion of the seas as a condition of her existence, we can not do otherwise than attack this claim. To bring this about must be said to be our first and foremost war aim. We are not fighting against England's remaining the foremost sea Power, if she is willing to provide the means necessary to establish her claim; but Germany is not in a position to drop the sword and still admit that England can wield the overlordship of the sea. The naval policy which was initiated by His Majesty the Emperor in 1897 gave the German policy direction and purpose. It was not the expression of an arbitrary demand, but of the justifiable recognition of the fact that matters were running their course according to historical precedent. Germany can maintain her world position from the economic as well as the political standpoint, only in the capacity of a sea Power which, it is true, has no desire to challenge the foremost Power with regard to her position as such, but which it would be more dangerous than advantageous for the leading sea Power to attack. The fact that England has up to the present time and during this war been able to maintain the belief on the part of all the world in her unquestioned predominance on the sea, is the real source of the disillusionments which we were doomed to experience. If we do not shatter this belief during this war, the reconstruction of our world position will fail as a result. In life, things are not judged by what they are, but only by the impressions which are created concerning them in the minds of men. Whether England's dominion of the seas is to remain or to perish depends upon what the rest of the world, excepting Germany, believes with regard to the point on the last day of the World War.

The unrestricted U-boat war is the only means given into our hands by which we can bring the whole world back to a true realization of things as they are. If once we succeed in breaking down the English dominion, we shall have fought a victorious fight. There is no middle course between this and Germany's ruin; and in this connection I again lay stress upon the point that the fact of this victory, not the extent to which we take advantage of it,

is the deciding factor. We need a victory in order to arrange our position in the world both politically and economically along the lines required by our national existence. I refuse to take the resolutions of the enemy economic conferences literally; still they point to the fact that in the future, which will be subjected far more than heretofore to commercial influences rather than political influences, hundreds of obstacles menace German commerce and German ocean traffic. Our only defense will be equitable commercial treaties, which are simply not to be had unless England is overcome. But we are not in a position to dispense with the benefits of that wealth which is the result of a flourishing foreign commerce, and which made it possible for us to meet the commercial and financial demands made upon us by this war, and without which in future, too, at all times, we shall be powerless and exposed to every new attack on the part of ill-disposed opponents. Furthermore, it is only victory which will make it possible for us to nullify the results of the tremendous feeling against us, instigated for the purpose of ruining our position in the eyes of nations.

I have considered it appropriate to set out the reasons for and against the unrestricted U-boat war, and to consider in detail the results of a declaration of war by the United States before taking up the question of the general political reaction of a break with the only remaining neutral world Power. It means the complete isolation of the Central Powers from overseas traffic, and it will immediately enkindle anew the courage of our enemies, which is now at a low ebb. But I must state that I do not look upon this last-mentioned moral effect as permanent. The long duration of the war has led to the result that such impressions based on moral support break into pieces when brought into contact with hard facts. The nations have become more cool-headed and now content themselves with looking upon the actual course of the war as it is, with realizing what military successes, hunger, and financial and economic exhaustion really mean, so far as the present and future are concerned. Since the war can be brought to an end only by the use of an instrumentality in connection with which we must accept the prospect of a break with the United States, and since, on the other hand, the war must by all means be brought to an end for the sake of our self-preservation, it is only right that we should quietly weigh in the balance the results of a declaration of war, even by the United States. We are left with the choice between two evils, so that we are obliged to decide, although reluctantly, in favor of the lesser one rather than adopt the alternative of certain destruction. By entering into the war, the United States Government will give up by a single move the sources of that commercial prosperity which has given it the towering political prominence which it now occupies. It stands face to face with the Japanese peril; it can neither inflict material damage upon us, nor can it be of material benefit to our enemies; and the U-boat war will menace its own ocean traffic—a

danger of which the Americans are no longer unaware since the raid of the U-53. If England is once brought to her knees, then an understanding will have to be brought about with the United States as well, by virtue of which alone she will be able to recover her commercial prosperity, and which will not necessarily result in political sacrifices upon her part.

The deciding factor which remains unchanged is the following: We must not lose sight of the American peril, because we must fight our way to victory, and an early victory too, in order to preserve our national existence. And all the more so after the answer to the German peace proposal has made it plain, both by the terms and spirit of the document, that our enemies are still bent upon the political destruction of Germany.

I guarantee that for its part the U-boat war will lead to victory.

V. HOLTZENDORFF,

Chief of the Admiralty Staff of the Navy.

[ENCLOSURES]

NOTES

Note 1: The British wheat supply.

The British wheat supply is composed of the stocks of foreign wheat in the ports of the United Kingdom; of the amounts coming from the domestic harvest at first hand, that is, those quantities which are still in the farmers' barns; and finally the stock which is held at second hand, that is, in the possession of the millers and dealers. The official publication of the London wheat market, the *London Grain, Seed and Oil Reporter*, which contains a detailed statement every week, provides us with a view into the situation; as do the trade publications of the Liverpool market, the *Corn Trade News*, and the daily press, which has a most excellent service. These sources of information call for critical scrutiny in applying them to the facts. Hand in hand with the custom of complete publicity with regard to the development of English life and trade, which has been kept up even in war time and which calls for participation on the part of each citizen in matters of public moment, and to this end is intended to keep everyone well informed, we find an anxiety which has existed for some time to calm communities both inside and outside of England with regard to the reliability of the English bread supply. But whosoever reads these publications consistently and compares them, has no difficulty in determining what the editors really think. According to the statistics published in the *Reporter* of the 5th of December, the stock of foreign wheat on hand amounted to 2.4 million quarters (217.10 kilograms), indicating thereby a comparatively high amount which, however, had been reduced again during the last weeks. This publication has stated since the beginning of October that it "believes" that the figures do not represent the "total" of the quantities which had been received to the government's account; a remark, which, in the way

it was stated, and in connection with all known numbers given with regard to imports, means very little, but, probably with good intention, suggests the general hope that the government had still further reserves as yet unrevealed. The lists are based on a calculation made up of the imports and deliveries which have been published, not of inventories which are more authentic, but in the main are taken at much longer intervals. It would seem that shipments from Canada which, moreover, are not of any particular importance, are not given in the statistics published by the *Reporter*. We are going far beyond the confines of caution if we assume that the sum of all the government stock and private stock amounts to 3 million quarters.

The first-hand stocks in English wheat are figured by the *Reporter* on the 5th of December as amounting to 4.461 million quarters. On the 12th of September, the new harvest, deducting the remaining stock of last year's wheat of about 575,000 quarters, is entered at less than 6 million quarters. This corresponds to the official estimate made public in the meantime, of 6.9 million quarters, deducting the remaining round million for seed purposes, etc. The stock of the 5th of December is to be considered, estimating cautiously, as 5 million quarters, that is, the yield of this fall's harvest with a remaining quantity of about 6.5 million for consumption; so that all information with regard to poor quality and wet weather for the harvest which affected its capacity for storing purposes can be left out of consideration.

There is no statistical statement covering second-hand stocks. It used to be normally about 2.5 million quarters. Minister Runciman explained the taking over by the state of the wheat imports on the 10th of October in the House of Parliament by the following reasons, among others, that the trade had only kept the smallest amount possible in stock, in view of the military possibility of releasing great quantities of wheat, access to which was then closed, by means of military measures, such as the opening of the Dardanelles as the result of the declaration of war by Roumania; and the *Corn Trade News* of the 24th of October directly confirms the reasons given by the government by stating in its weekly record that the trade would have kept its hands upon a great quantity of reserves if the government had not meddled with the grain business, in this way adding to the general uncertainty. The letter of a Liverpool grain merchant to the Manchester *Guardian* of the 16th of October gives an estimate of only 1 million quarters. The *Times* of the 31st of October spoke of the infinitesimal reserves held by the millers. According to these estimates, the second-hand supplies may be assumed to be overstated if we estimate them at 2 million.

This leaves us with a result of a total stock at the beginning of December of 10 million quarters which in view of the weekly consumption of 650,000 quarters would last for fifteen weeks. The question of the amount of weekly consumption long remained in doubt. Up to the first of October, the

statistician of the *Reporter* put the figure at only 600,000 quarters, raising it thereafter to 630,000 quarters. But the fact is that the consumption had for greater lengths of time, if not for each week, been set at 650,000 quarters, taking as a basis the imports and the amount of stock remaining; the *Corn Trade News* consistently gave the number at 640,000 quarters, and the *Reporter* went up to 650,000 quarters as soon as it found that the import figures were sufficient to justify the announcement of this high rate of consumption to the public without derogating from the stock on hand as figured.

Note 2: The North American export balance.

According to the accounts relating to trade and navigation of the United Kingdom, published by the Chamber of Commerce, England imported about $25\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters of wheat and wheat flour in the harvest year September, 1915, to August, 1916. Of these, 16.4 million came from the United States and 7 million came from Canada, making a total of 23.4 million, or 92 per cent of the entire amount. Argentina, as has already been stated in the July memorial, had been thrust into the background in order to save tonnage by the shorter journey from the United States. This held also with regard to India, and particularly in the case of Australia, whose bounteous crops were allowed to remain untouched; this was a matter of geography, not of "imperial sentiment" as the *Glasgow Herald* said on the 29th of June. It is instructive to note how the Englishman, before whose self-confident ruthless methods of business a great part of the world prostrates itself, can make such ruthless statements unchallenged.

In the preceding year North America came out with a record harvest. Now the very reverse is the situation. The government estimate of the United States sets the crop at 158 million bushels, (27.2 kilograms) of spring wheat, which is also characterized by poor quality, as against 356 million in the preceding year, and 482 million of winter wheat, as against 655 million in the preceding year, of which, however, only 515 million were fit to be ground; whereas, the present winter wheat is said to be of good quality. The *Corn Trade News* of the 16th of September estimated a loss of 20 million bushels which were not fit to be ground; the issue of the 18th of October published a report of Snow, the first American crop expert, which reduced the amount by 18 million, light weight. Both these reductions we may overlook for reasons of caution. The result is, then, a total of 640 million bushels. It is said that the United States entered the harvest year beginning the 1st of July with 163 million bushels of wheat reserves from the old harvest. This results in a total supply of 803 million bushels at the beginning of the harvest year. With this supply, the 623 million bushels given by Snow as the amount necessary for home consumption must be contrasted. We are then left with a balance of about 180 million, which, putting at the

lowest possible figure the amount of the reserve required at the end of the harvest year, that is, at 50 million, leaves us 130 million bushels for purposes of export. Of this amount, the United States had exported about $25\frac{1}{2}$ million by the 31st of August. This leaves nearly $104\frac{1}{2}$ million bushels for the English harvest year beginning with the 1st of September, 1916, which, by way of caution, may well be increased to an estimate of 110 million bushels, since it is possible that the estimates made were put at a low rate for purposes of influencing the market price. On this assumption, the United States would have started the English harvest year with just about $13\frac{3}{4}$ million quarters.

The Canadian harvest was officially estimated at 160 million bushels. The *Corn Trade News* of the 24th of October called attention to a more favorable private estimate of 200 million, on account of which it considered that it was justified in expressing itself with "a moderate optimism." We can then safely proceed on the assumption of 180 million, splitting the difference. The reserve from the previous year was calculated to be about 28 million of bushels on the 1st of September, the home consumption to be about 100 million, so that the export balance which remains amounts to 108 million bushels. As set forth in the *Times* of the 24th of November, the official estimate is announced as only about $99\frac{1}{2}$ million bushels, that is, about $12\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters.

The entire export balance of North America was, then, according to these figures, about $26\frac{1}{4}$ million quarters on the 1st of September, which, for the sake of caution, we can increase by an increment of 5 per cent, which gives a total of $27\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters. In July and August, 1917, a further 3 million quarters could arrive from the shipments of spring wheat.

In the last harvest year, England received about 40 per cent of the American shipments. It is essential that this proportion be increased. This increase faces the difficulty that, in view of the situation of the world's wheat market, demands are being made from all sides. France and Italy in particular are, as the result of poor harvests, under the absolute necessity of obtaining more. The danger of competition between the Allies was to be obviated by an agreement which made England the general purchaser for all. Under these conditions, England will not allow herself to suffer in the process, but of course will not be able to leave her allies in the lurch for obvious reasons of political necessity. Up to the present time, and taking the average of the last two months, England's share is about 50 per cent, so that England would have to expect $13\frac{3}{4}$ million quarters from North America. Of this amount, already $7\frac{1}{4}$ million had been shipped by the 23d of November. The remaining $6\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters would at the rate of the shipments of the last few weeks averaging 334,000 quarters extend to the beginning of April. And even at that time there will be a shortage of 191,000 quarters which amounts to 36 per cent of the amount of British imports required every week. This calculation would seem to be rather favorable than

otherwise. It has been constantly stated in England that importations from North America could not be relied upon for the new year to any appreciable extent. On the other hand, in November, estimates of a more generous nature of the export balance of North America have been proclaimed reaching 33 or even 35 million quarters. The impression created by these estimates was that their main purpose was to allay all alarm. On the whole, the assumption seems to be justified that the imports from North America will begin to fall off to a very serious extent as early as February.

This opinion is supported by observation of the American wheat market.

The movements of prices in the United States can only be explained by an unusual shortage. The average quality red-winter wheat reached one dollar and ninety cents in November as against one dollar about the middle of the year; this means about 300 marks per ton, which, as is known, cost 260 marks in Germany. The *Corn Trade News* reported on the 30th of October that the price of bread in Chicago was one shilling, 5½ pence for the 4-pound English loaf as against the English price of 10 pence, that is, 70 per cent higher. According to the *Reporter* of the 18th of October, wheat was shipped from Argentina to the United States, an unprecedented event. The northern districts which are mainly grain-raising districts, have already bought Canadian wheat, whereas Canada, as may well be understood, is exerting every effort to keep its entire export balance for the mother country. In the United States, it was expected that the Canadian government would issue an embargo on high-priced wheat. The attempt was made to explain shipments of wheat from Australia to the American west coast by saying that in this way American wheat would be left free for shipment from the east coast to Europe. The overcrowding of the American railroad lines which, according to all reports, can not handle even the normal amount of grain transportation for the country, would seem to rebut such an assumption; in no event can the idea be seriously entertained that appreciable quantities of grain could possibly be so distributed over the American continent from the west as to make it possible to ship proportionate amounts to Europe.

Ever since the middle of September, the general desire has been expressed in the United States that an embargo be placed upon wheat in order to make bread cheaper. Petitions to this effect are being addressed to the President; the chairman of one of the committees of the House of Representatives, Mr. Fitzgerald, has submitted a resolution to this effect. Up to the present time, the farmers and the dealers have fought against this with all the strength at their command, and have thus far been successful; and it also appears that the American Government is very desirous of blocking such a measure in the interests of its English friends. Recommendations were made in the United States as early as the end of September to use corn in the baking of bread.

It is significant that the American price of wheat falls as soon as there is evidence of fear that the United States might be drawn into the war, or that, even without the war, the point of imposing an embargo on exports might be reached. Of late, the peace proposal of the Central Powers has resulted in depressing prices.

Note 3: Supplying the world with wheat.

The export of wheat from Argentina is next in line, practically speaking, from the geographic standpoint, to the exportation by North America of its assumed balance of $27\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters which may be supplemented in July and August, 1917, by 3 million quarters of spring wheat. According to trade reports, the Argentine Republic is supposed to have entered upon the current harvest year with from 3 to 4 million quarters left over from the old crop, whereas a balance of 5 million quarters is expected from the new crop. Ever since October, the reports about the Argentine crops have constantly become less favorable; plagues of locusts, a diminution in cultivated areas, and, above all, prolonged droughts, have injured the yield particularly in the northern provinces to a most extraordinary extent. The *Times* announced towards the end of November that the Argentine Republic was going to announce an embargo on wheat and corn. Very lately, reports have become a little more favorable. According to these reports, it must be assumed that there will be a total export balance of 6 million quarters.

The *Corn Trade News* estimated that the Indian export balance for 1916-17 would amount to 6 million quarters, but, in very cautious and non-committal terms; the *Reporter* set it at only 4 million quarters. It is altogether too early to estimate the prospect of the crops that are due in March and April; but the figures of earlier years, and the recollection of the preceding year which, in spite of the commandeering of the harvest by the government, resulted in disillusion, justify us in accepting those figures with caution. On the 17th of November, it was publicly announced that the Indian Government had permitted the export of a bare 2 million quarters. Taken all in all, 5 million quarters is practically the highest quantity which can be counted on.

Finally, Australia still has at her disposal a very respectable reserve which has been left over from the copious harvest of the preceding year on account of the absence of cargo space. It is listed as between 10 and 12 million quarters. The new harvest is said to be bounteous, even if not as extraordinary as it was in the preceding year, although varying reports have come concerning the areas under cultivation, which are, generally speaking, comparatively smaller. We shall have to estimate the export balance of the harvest year at 20 million quarters, although it is true that ever since the end of November the *Times* has repeatedly announced that

the prospects of the new crop were changing for the worse as the result of unfavorable weather.

If, finally, we assume that other areas of production will provide another million quarters of export balance, particularly the north of Russia and North Africa, the result is that some $62\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters will represent the exports from all these countries for the harvest year of 1916-17.

Of the above, England in the first place will need $27\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters.

According to the trade journals, the French demand for imports will amount to 12 million quarters as against 9.9 million in the preceding year. The supplies which have been carried over from the preceding year are designated as scant; the new crop is poor, with a yield of a poor 26 million quarters as against 29 million in the previous year and 43 million in normal times.

It is assumed that Italy will need a supply of from 8 to 9 million quarters, as against 10 million of imports in the preceding year. The falling off in amount was based upon a crop estimate which, generally speaking, gives the equivalent in wheat of the preceding year; whereas corn has fallen off from the normal yield by $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. The *Corriere Economico* accordingly estimated the amount of imports required at $11\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters. In spite of this, only 9 million will be here set down. Thus, $48\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters of imports are required for the three great European allied countries. And to them we must add Portugal with 500,000 quarters, bringing the needs of the Entente up to 48.75 million.

As regards the needs of the other European States, Holland and Belgium, if the trade journals are correct, require 7 million quarters. And Spain will still require 500,000 quarters even if the crops this year are copious. Scandinavia is estimated as requiring $2\frac{1}{2}$ million, Switzerland one million, Greece $2\frac{1}{2}$ million including a portion to be given to Serbia. This totals up to an additional 13.5 million quarters for Europe, over and above the allied States.

And lastly, 6 million quarters are estimated as representing the needs of the countries outside of Europe.

Note 4: Calculation of tonnage entering English ports.

The statistics of the British Board of Trade, consisting in the accounts relating to trade and navigation of the United Kingdom published every month, contain the figures of the ships engaged in ocean commerce which have entered English harbors with cargoes and which have cleared from English ports, classified according to the colors they fly, and further classified according to their individual ports of departure and destination. In order to estimate the tonnage which enters English ports, we have taken the higher number of the two numbers of the tonnage which has entered from one country and has cleared for the same country. For instance,

supposing that 505,000 tons of English shipping have entered British ports from the United States, and 298,000 tons have cleared for the United States, the tonnage which is engaged in commerce between England and the United States amounts to 505,000 tons. The calculation here computed is based on the averages of the months of July to September, 1916. It enables us to ascertain the number of trips made during the year between England and individual countries. From this we deduce the tonnage which is necessary in order to maintain the monthly average of England's sea traffic with the country in question.

There are deduced herefrom the following totals for the sea traffic in English ports and the tonnage which is entering English ports (in gross registered tons):

	Ocean traffic of English ports	Tonnage entering English ports
British ships.	3,323,400	6,755,000
Other enemy ships.	585,750	912,300
Neutral ships.	2,262,200	3,090,200
Total.	6,144,350	10,757,500

The details of the above calculations may be examined in the files of the Admiralty Staff.

NUMBER 5

PART VI.—THE ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TOWARDS GERMANY AND A PEACE MOVE BY WILSON

1. COLONEL HOUSE'S MISSION EARLY IN 1916

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Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 17, 1915.
No. 556.

WASHINGTON, November 23, 1915.

In the course of my last interview with Colonel House, he explained Mr. Wilson's latest plan to me, according to which the President is again desirous of playing the part of peacemaker. The only tangible thing about the plan up to the present time is that a second mission of Colonel House, covering London and Berlin is to take place, if your Excellency will agree to this.

Everything else is in a state of uncertainty; Mr. Wilson entertains the opinion that he should not meddle with questions such as those involving changes in territory, or indemnities, etc. These matters in no way concern the Americans, and that moreover, for this reason, the President would not be backed up by public opinion on this side if his peace move involved going into questions of this kind. But that the only point in which the Americans felt a great interest was the restoration of peace, as well as the elimination of "militarism" and "navalism." That Germany would only be in the position of forcing England to recognize the "freedom of the seas" in case the United States of America would stand back of this desire, and in case we were ready to abandon our presumably dangerous militarism. That the belligerent Powers would in this way be able to mutually insure themselves against a breaking out of a new war.

Colonel House said to me that he had already expressed the above train of thought to your Excellency in the course of an oral interview, so that I would not need to go into the subject in detail. Mr. Wilson considers that a practical carrying out of the plan is possible, because in these days all preparedness for war is, as is made plain by recent experiences, dependent upon the manufacture of ammunition. In this connection, the two parties to the conflict could give binding assurances. The President is of the opinion that such proposals as these would necessarily be welcomed by all the Powers involved, because, after peace is restored, they would need all the man-power available for industrial purposes in order to supply them with

the money with which the war debts might be paid. Mr. Wilson further believes that all other matters would be easily settled if his peace basis were to be accepted.

It is impossible for me to determine from here whether your Excellency desires any kind of a peace move at this time, and whether the conditions which we will submit have already assumed tangible form. I must say that Mr. Wilson's idea of "the freedom of the seas" is one well worthy of consideration, because England has, in the last analysis, brought this war about for the purpose of securing her dominion of the seas for years to come. The only thing to decide is as to whether or not we either can or want to make concessions regarding the so-called "militarism." As a matter of fact, they would be concessions in form only, since our "militarism" has never either menaced or oppressed anyone.

Looked at from this standpoint, it seems to me that the House mission is to be desired because the United States is unfortunately so poorly represented in Berlin. Colonel House is at least absolutely neutral, very discreet as well as trustworthy, and stands in the very center of the political situation on this side. He could accomplish much in the way of improving mutual relations. But if your Excellency should have already decided that the so-called "militarism" will be and must be absolutely excluded from consideration during peace negotiations, the House mission would simply involve us in difficulties. But if this mission is desired, kindly send me a radiogram containing the one word "agreed." In such case, Mr. House would depart at once and I shall then endeavor to persuade him to go first to Berlin, and then to London. If I hear nothing from your Excellency, I shall go slow in the House matter. Up to the present time, he has been of extraordinary value to me.

BERNSTORFF.

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Secretary of State v. Jagow to Ambassador Count Bernstorff

Telegram No. 180.

Reply to No. 556.

BERLIN, December 20, 1915.

Colonel House welcome. Desirable he come here first to discuss meaning of word concerning our country. Foreign.

V. JAGOW.

Secretary of State Solf to Secretary of State v. Jagow

Rec. Berlin, January 28, 1916.

BERLIN, January 28, 1916.

DEAR MR. V. JAGOW:

Colonel House talked to me for over an hour and a half when breakfasting with Mr. Gerard. I may call particular attention to the following selected from the many interesting things said: First, the general impression that he is obviously endeavoring to bring light into the darkness of the international puzzle, and shows that it is his earnest endeavor to be as neutral as possible. He has seen almost all the leading people in England, and has had interviews with them. For the most part, they appeared to be anti-German. He talked longest with Sir Edward Grey, whom he described as the most tractable and most desirous of negotiating, and the most inclined to negotiations. His situation, however, has become very difficult, and the possibility of substituting him by a successor from the numbers of the outspoken enemies of Germany was threatening. House considers that the possible resignation of Grey would be undesirable and fatal so far as German interests are concerned; that the civil and military governments in London were divided; that it was assumed in London that the same differences existed in our country, and that it was regretted that the Chancellor, you, Zimmermann, and the rest of the civilians were not in the position to have the upper hand continually; that the popular opinion, and the press was stronger in England than the governmental will; that the King was a nobody and that there was not a statesman of outstanding capacity and energy in the whole cabinet; that he had been informed with regard to the bad opinion that the people in Germany had of the United States, and that he could understand our attitude; but that this poor opinion of the United States existed in England perhaps to an even stronger degree; that the exchange of absolutely unfriendly notes between Washington and London was a matter of which probably our government had no knowledge; that the feeling was very far from being either harmonious or fortunate; that as far as he was concerned, he was still engaged, as before, in attempting to clear up the situation, and to succeed in having a stop put to the insane butchery and destruction which was affecting the whole world; that he entertained the confident belief that there were enough far-seeing people in England who pursued the same train of thought as that followed by a number of Germans whom he had met here; that people had confidence in the Chancellor and also in the Foreign Office; that Grey had expressed himself to this effect and was, on his side, inclined to debate the question of blockade and submarine warfare, and to make concessions in the starvation policy in return for restrictions in the exercise of the torpedo war. But he stands rather alone. Concerning his pet idea, the freedom of the

seas, he has the following to say: After he had communicated his purpose to the Chancellor on the occasion of his last visit in Berlin, and as the result thereof the latter had put himself in communication with Count Bernstorff, his suggestions had become known in London before he had even expressed them himself, so that he had to meet the very difficult situation of convincing his friends in England that the suggestions had originated with him, and not with Germany; but that the whole question had at that time been made an idle one as the result of the *Lusitania* matter; that the feeling in England had so changed in the twinkling of an eye that it had become almost dangerous for him to talk about the question of any change in the doctrines of the law of the sea; that now, on the occasion of his last visit, he had spoken about the matter with Lloyd George, Lord Reading (Chief Justice?) and again with Grey, and had so far overcome their opposition that they had at least been willing to discuss his views; but that he regretted most of all that no arbiter in the cause of peace existed since he had been obliged to realize that it was impossible for Germany to be willing to concede that his country was sufficiently unbiased to assume such a duty; that if such a platform could be provided on the basis of which people like, for instance, Grey in England, and you here, could meet, an understanding would be reached between early in the morning and sunset; but that in the absence of negotiations, this war could not come to an end, and negotiations could and would, according to his firm conviction, lead to an understanding between Germany and England; that in spite of all, the foundation therefor still existed.

His arguments were, in the main, very plausible, with the exception of the way in which he endeavored to meet my charge of deliveries of ammunition. That was exceedingly weak. In great haste and with best regards,

SOLF.

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Memorandum of the Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg on a conversation with Colonel House

BERLIN, January 28, 1916.

The conception of the freedom of the seas suggested in the preceding year—freedom in time of war as well as time of peace—was unfortunately used by Bernstorff and Dernburg as a German idea, which hurt the cause in the United States. That Sir Edward Grey had indicated that the conception was one which could be discussed; Lloyd George called it absolutely outside of the possibility of discussion but in the further course of the interview appears to have gone into the matter; that in the meantime the Lord Chief Justice, apparently acting for Lloyd George, had later emphatically charac-

terized this impression as being erroneous; that the sinking of the *Lusitania* had immediately made any further working out of the conception an impossibility. My question as to whether Wilson in the future, and also during the course of the war, was willing to continue to champion the freedom of the seas as against England was emphatically answered in the affirmative; but it was stated that unfortunately the constantly recurring incidents in connection with ourselves had tied the President's hands; in answer to this, I announced the view that we had always done everything that was conceivably possible for us to do in the interests of maintaining the good relations existing between us and the United States, but the result had simply consisted in England drawing the noose around us all the tighter; that this situation was an unbearable one.

In spite of this, he insisted that the feeling against America existed almost as strongly in England as it did with us; that he had even been told there that Wilson had absolutely thrown away the opportunity of playing the part of peace negotiator, through his attitude, which was dictated by Bernstorff. I asked whether people in England believed that Bernstorff had practically dictated the *Lusitania* notes to Wilson and whether, as a matter of fact, they had not expected that America would not only deliver ammunition but take up arms for England in the bargain.

It was stated twice and with particular emphasis that Lloyd George desired a permanent peace, but a peace which would lead to a solid understanding with us; that Runciman's speeches were irresponsible, but that he was a small man, and had nothing to say; that one great difficulty consisted in the fact that there was no united cabinet policy in England; that the members of the cabinet simply took completely differing views; but that in the end some way out of the situation must be found; that for the present, peace seemed impossible as far as the Entente was concerned, because, on account of the existing military situation, we would make demands which the Entente would never be able to meet as long as it was not conquered; that the Entente was continuing with the war in the expectation that our situation would become worse and worse. I asked how the Entente could take such a view as this, and whether we, perchance, were supposed to beg for peace; for as yet, at least, we were not beaten either. We must not talk about asking for peace, but we could commence "to talk about peace," it was said; that I had done this in the Reichstag, but that he was well acquainted with the replies which I had received; that I, too, desired a permanent peace, and was willing to take this stand, provided that in the future we could neither be menaced from the Polish side nor the Belgian side; that we should also have to have an indemnity for the north of France, which France would have to pay; that I had worked long enough on the problem of an understanding with England. Thereupon, I referred to the Haldane mission, and reminded him of the pernicious impression which had resulted from the rejection of all our proposals,

and the constantly increasing permanence of the bonds which bound England to the Entente, its attitude at the outbreak of the war and during the war, even upon the sensible and calm circles of German society. I said that I had always hoped for a loyal understanding with England, together with the United States, which then would have guaranteed the peace of the world, and in comparison with this great aim the neutrality of Belgium, to which Sir Edward Goschen had in his last, and, by the way, private interview with me insisted, had the appearance of a scrap of paper.

I stated that England would have to make reparation in a good many matters before pleasant relations could develop between us, even after peace had come; Mr. House appeared not to know about the last speech made by Sir Edward Grey with regard to the blockade; speaking of France, he told me that people were in very high spirits there.

In answer to his remark that, while considerable confidence existed in England with regard to Jagow, myself, Zimmermann and Solf, there was much distrust of the military party, I stated with great emphasis that the Emperor and I understood each other perfectly, a statement which visibly impressed him.

As an example of the treatment of our prisoners in Russia, I told him how the Empress had, a short time ago, talked with a young officer who had returned from imprisonment in Russia after being severely wounded, and whom the Russians had locked in a cell, when he was clad in nothing but his shirt, after one of his legs had been amputated, and where there was nothing but a wooden couch with no straw and a temperature of 14 degrees below zero. He was shocked, and is going to request his President to take energetic measures.

V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

2. LETTER OF MINISTER V. D. LANCKEN

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*Minister v. d. Lancken to Privy Counselor of Legation Montgelas, at that time
Recording Counsel in the Foreign Office*

Rec. Berlin, January 18, 1916.

BRUSSELS, January 16, 1916.

DEAR COUNT MONTGELAS:

. . . Immediately after the return of Minister Brand Whitlock, I had a long friendly interview with him. . . .

From the general conversation which I had with Minister Brand Whitlock, I may refer to the following:

It is well known that Whitlock is an old personal friend and protégé of Wilson's. He has had a confidential talk with him and assured me that

Wilson . . . is no sworn enemy of the Germans at bottom in connection with his policies. Whitlock is convinced that Wilson does not believe that the destruction, or even a very material weakening of Germany on the political side, is to the interest of the United States, and for no other than the simple reason that the end and aim of American policy is, as it is for us, the "freedom of the seas"; that, relatively speaking, Wilson was favorably inclined toward Germany as the result of his personal admiration for German philosophy and literature; that Wilson had said that such a people must be allowed to maintain the level which they had gained.

That so far as the munitions question was concerned, Wilson was unable to do anything more, because he lacked legal authority to prohibit it; and moreover his deliberations had led him to think that it was quite possible that even the United States might, in a great war, have to import munitions from overseas.

That Wilson was much taken up with the question as to when his activities in behalf of peace would begin. For, according to Whitlock's statement, it seems to be quite settled that the President is convinced that *he* will have to bring about the peace. That after a careful discussion with regard to such possibilities as offered themselves, Wilson and he (Whitlock) had come to the full conclusion that at present no circumstance was available which could even approximately tend to serve as one of the media by which peace might be brought about. Whitlock himself is convinced that when the time comes we shall find Wilson willing and ready. That if for no reason other than this prospect of mediating in the cause of peace, Wilson was unwilling to allow the United States to become involved in the war.

That Wilson and Lansing had both been very much wrought up about the behavior of Ambassador Page in London in the Cavell matter and would have preferred to have recalled the Ambassador immediately; that Page had subsequently been brought roundly to task; that Colonel House's mission had likewise for one of its purposes that of making it clear to Page that he was a neutral representative.

Whitlock . . . told me that during his leave of absence he had been offered a half million dollars to resign his post and lecture in the United States about the Germans in Belgium; that all he would have had to do would have been to accept the opportunity. In view of the fact that he is not a wealthy man, this certainly constituted a sacrifice on his part; but he is obviously looking for his reward along other lines, for I am inclined to conclude as the result of certain indications, that he wants to be the middleman between Wilson and us in carrying out the former's peace plans, and that it is Wilson's intention to use him as the one man who is wholly devoted and pliable for this purpose, as soon as the President thinks that the time has come.

LANCKEN.

3. DISPATCHES OF AMBASSADOR COUNT BERNSTORFF FROM THE PERIOD
FEBRUARY 18, 1916, TO NOVEMBER 12, 1916

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*Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office*Rec. Berlin, March 13, 1916.
No. 90.

WASHINGTON, February 18, 1916.

The publication of the letters found on Captain v. Papen by the English has, generally speaking, not had the result in this country which our enemies hoped for. The anti-German ring tried to make as much capital as possible of the affair, and some of our friends who were named in the published papers suffered, I regret to say, certain inconveniences; largely, in any event, as the result of their own fault, since they had written indiscreet letters wholly unnecessarily. As the result, Mr. v. Papen has been to a large extent sharply criticised, even by the official German side over here. Subsequent attacks were also made upon Mr. Dernburg because the well-known and extremely indiscreet letter of Georg von Skals to Maximilian Harden was included in the letters published. *La critique est aisée et l'art est difficile*. Nothing is easier than to throw stones at someone who has come to grief in attempting to carry out his duties. He who puts his hand bravely to the plow instead of remaining satisfied by writing a critical essay on existing unfavorable conditions, is always in danger of being sacrificed to these conditions. Justice demands that I call attention on this occasion to the fact that Messrs. Dernburg and Papen went to work here with heart and soul quite undismayed, and did the very best they could in accordance with the individual limitations of each. Every human being makes a mistake some time and must pay for it. This is what happened in the case of the two gentlemen aforesaid. Although of a very different type, both are inspired by a sanguine optimism which continually spurred them on to renewed attempts to combat the repulsive conditions existing here, but at the same time caused them, from time to time, to overlook those dangers which are lurking about us all in this country which is very definitely antagonistic to us. He who eventually writes the history of the German-American relations during the great war may well reach the conclusion that here too, circumstances were stronger than men. Without the storm occasioned in the United States by the *Lusitania* case, it is probable that neither Mr. Dernburg or Mr. v. Papen would have failed. It is only he who (cipher missing) has actually taken a fighting part who is fit to judge how great those difficulties were which have come rolling in upon us since the 7th of May of last year. It is not going too far to speak of a persecution of all Germans here and their personal and political friends, and, as is wont to be the case where persecution is carried on, many of the weaker brethren disavowed us, and some of these are now endeavoring to get into touch with us again.

Ever since the *Lusitania* incident, our activity on this side has been a constant labor of Sisyphus. When we thought that we had reached the top of the mountain, the rock always rolled down again. This situation is repeating itself at present, when the question of the arming of enemy merchant ships has stirred up all our enemies on this side into renewed activity. So far as the *Lusitania* question itself is concerned, it must be conceded to be settled but the final formula, which was reached only after untold labor, is, as (cipher missing) expressed it, "acceptable and not satisfactory." The battle about the word "illegal" ended with a failure on the part of Mr. Wilson, since he desires no war. This means that the President has not obtained the diplomatic victory in the *Lusitania* question which he wished to have to his credit for election purposes. In the meantime, he is looking around for additional laurel wreaths with which he would like to face the voters. He, too, who, in steady conflict with the American Government must daily vex himself about the vacillation and sidesteps in which this government indulges will have to admit that the position of a President who hopes for reelection is an extraordinarily difficult one. Every day he is mercilessly criticized by the Republican leaders, even by such eminent persons as Elihu Root, not to mention the savage Theodore Roosevelt. Add to this the forceful pressure of the powerful anti-German ring, which holds up its hands in holy horror at every step taken against England and is longing for a war with Germany. And finally it is in the nature of the situation that political unrest would seem in a certain sense to be desirable for the purpose of bringing about preparedness. With regard to this last, Mr. Wilson has taken a firm stand, and so we must expect that his election speeches will always mention a "menacing situation" which makes it very difficult for the President to hold secure the longed-for peace so much desired by the American people.

If we leave to one side all election maneuvers which make it impossible to count upon the Wilsonian policy in detail, its main direction remains the same. It is the President's desire to maintain peace and prosperity for the American people, to give the impulse to peace in Europe, and to develop international law along the lines of humanity and the freedom of the seas, as he pictures this last to be. Colonel House must have spoken to your Excellency in this connection. He is the confidant of Mr. Wilson's inmost thoughts as is no other man.

At the time when this report is received by your Excellency, the negotiations with regard to the arming of merchant ships will have proceeded to a point further than that reached today, so that there will be no object in going into details at the present time. Whatever happens eventually, we can at least consider it settled that this government is impelled by the wish to bring about a *modus vivendi* by negotiations with the belligerents, on the ground of which the lives of non-combatants, and particularly of neutrals, shall be made secure on the seas. On the other hand, we can approach the judgment

of all those questions which come up only from one standpoint, namely, that this war must be fought to a victorious end. It is impossible to judge from here how this result can most safely be brought about. At the same time, speaking from the standpoint of one on this side, I must respectfully repeat my opinion so often expressed that, if a catastrophe similar to the *Lusitania* case occurs again, war with the United States can not be prevented by any art known to diplomacy.

BERNSTORFF.

197

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, March 25, 1916.
No. 108.

WASHINGTON, February 28, 1916.

The question of the arming of merchant ships of our enemies still occupies an important position in the field of political interest and for the time being has robbed all other considerations of their significance. Diplomatic negotiations with the American Government are never pleasant, because they are invariably carried on by that government under the influence of internal politics. Naturally, this is much more the case in a presidential election year. Mr. Wilson has absolutely made up his mind to be reelected, and he needs successes in the diplomatic field to bring about this result. In earlier times, these meant little (cipher missing) life of an American politician, but the European war has definitely given the United States a place on the world's stage never before occupied by her. It is true that, looked at from the point of view of this country, the President can point with pride to the fact that he has managed to preserve peace for the country, and has brought it prosperity. But his enemies come back again and again with the reproach that this result has been reached at the price of the prestige of the United States. Mr. Wilson's expression "too proud to fight" has become a byword and is constantly being quoted against him. This situation has changed the peace president into an agitator for preparedness and has awakened in his mind the necessity of playing the part of the strong man. It could almost be said that Theodore Roosevelt has drawn Mr. Wilson into a trap, for the accouterments of war do not become the cool-headed academician, and if it really came to a war with us the people would certainly prefer the savage Theodore as a leader to the professor. The latter is like a billiard ball which always bounds back immediately whenever it strikes the cushion. Mr. Wilson let his best opportunity for war slip, for the Americans would have taken part in the conflict with a certain extent of enthusiasm on the *Lusitania* question even after the passage of nine months, but on this occasion Mr. Wilson's need for peace

came off victorious. If it had only used a little journalistic skill, the American government might have been able to present the settlement of the *Lusitania* question in the light of a success. Instead, it looks from here as if the President had given in on the fundamental question in order to avoid war. In the meantime, the miscarriage of Mr. Wilson's diplomacy in the matter of the arming of merchant ships has placed him in a still more difficult position. Why it was that he wrote the well-known note to our enemies when it was not his intention to subsequently back it up, is a matter which is not even clearly explained today. However that may be, Wilson has brought himself into an extremely uncomfortable situation, diplomatically speaking, because he is now in a position of citing points of law to sustain that attitude which he formerly denounced as absolutely untenable. Queerly enough, he appears to have completely deceived himself with regard to the attitude of Congress, and unfortunately his best counselor and only true friend, Colonel House, was absent. The latter has always agreed with me in the view that both Houses of Congress were at least as anti-English as they were anti-German. This proved itself most clearly to be the case in the present instance and caught the anti-German press on this side wholly unawares. This was followed by the exchange of letters between the President and Senator Stone, copies of which were furnished me from another quarter. He who is acquainted with Mr. Wilson's style will recognize at once the fact that his letter was drawn up for the purpose of finding a way out of his difficulty. The President speaks only of the rights of Americans without defining them. But, from his point of view, it was necessary for him to prevent Congress under any conditions from taking the matter out of his hands. If this had been done, Wilson would have been left without an election slogan, for the maintenance of peace would have been attributed to the action of Congress. While one is in the midst of negotiations, a final judgment can not be announced. In the meantime, the President appears to be trying to escape from his *cul de sac* by his usual roundabout methods without becoming involved in a war with us.

All other questions have, as I have already said, momentarily gone quite into the discard. A new Secretary of War has not as yet been appointed, and as the result, preparedness measures are, for the time being, at a halt. In this connection, Wilson will probably yield completely to Congress, while in another matter of personal import he has gotten into a conflict with the Senate. The point is that the President has appointed the radical Jewish lawyer, Louis Brandeis, a member of the Supreme Court of the United States. The result was a storm of objections coming from all conservative quarters. Instead of confirming the appointment, which is everywhere looked upon as an election maneuver, the Senate at once provided for a careful investigation of Mr. Brandeis's record up to the present time. Whether this gentleman has really indulged in dishonest acts, or has only drawn upon himself the

hatred of the trusts on account of his radical tendencies, it is difficult to say, and from a political standpoint it is absolutely immaterial. The only significance that the matter has is that it shows that the Senate is no longer willing to put up with the autocratic methods of the President.

BERNSTORFF.

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Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, March 31, 1916.
No. 123.

WASHINGTON, March 10, 1916.

The fight between President Wilson and Congress has closed with a victory on the part of the former, or, to speak more accurately, with an apparent victory. Emphasis must be continually laid upon the fact that the real questions involved in this fight were those of internal politics and not, as it appeared from the outside, questions involving the pending diplomatic differences of opinion with regard to the U-boat war. If this last opportunity had been taken from the President's hands, Mr. Wilson's political career would have been ended then and there. He would not even have been able to get the Democratic nomination. In view of the fact that there is no other likely Democratic candidate in the field, the party would have committed plain and simple suicide if it had dropped Mr. Wilson. As the result, both Houses of Congress avoided having the question of the arming of merchant vessels come to a parliamentary decision. The resolutions in question were simply laid on the table so that Senators and Representatives were under no necessity of expressing their views upon them. There is no doubt that the majority in both Houses is, even today, of the opinion that Americans should be kept off armed merchant ships. Wilson was able to win his Pyrrhic victory only by giving definite promises to the leaders of Congress that he would do all that he possibly could to avoid a war with Germany. It follows that we have gained the following remarkable advantage as the result of the past weeks, that the American people have expressed themselves through their chosen representatives against a war with Germany. Your Excellency is well aware that I have always prophesied that this would be the feeling of Congress, although Mr. Lansing, in his talks with me in the course of the negotiations concerning the *Lusitania*, always asserted the contrary. The struggle with the Congress has created extraordinary excitement over here. The prevailing nervousness was the occasion of an endless amount of gossip, mutual recriminations, and ungrounded accusations. Whoever criticised the President was looked upon as a traitor to his country. But thereby we

must not allow the keenness of our vision to be impaired. All kinds of vapors will continue to arise from the political witches' cauldron of the American presidential election. But we can rest assured for the future that this government will honorably endeavor to find a peaceful mode of escape from the existing difficulties. On the other hand, we should not blind ourselves to the fact that the situation is still a very difficult one, because the anti-German ring is carrying on its Diocletian-like persecution of all Germans in the United States, and because this country is economically aligned with our enemies' cause. Every time the present government shows an inclination to proceed, even in a mild way, against our enemies, the overpowering influence of the anti-German ring, of the industries, and of the press, makes itself felt. Mr. Wilson can not risk taking any step which would jeopardize the prosperity of this country, which is dependent upon our enemies. The situation will only become definitely improved when there is nothing more to be got out of our opponents.

BERNSTORFF.

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Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, April 29, 1916.

Telegram No. 21.

Answer to telegram No. 28.

WASHINGTON, April 26, 1916.

The inquiries of your Excellency have been for the most part answered by my telegrams 16, 19 and 20. Let me repeat for the purpose of clearness:

1. U-boat war carried on in accordance with our declarations regarding the Mediterranean and according to our notes in the *Frye* case would be looked upon here as legal; everything exceeding the above as illegal. Unfortunately, the impression which exists here is that we do not really intend to carry out these promises even if we should announce them officially and in writing as principles of the entire U-boat warfare. For this reason—

2. I repeat my proposal that the U-boat war be discontinued during the time consumed by negotiations. In this way we would avoid a break and at the same time the appearance that we are conceding a great deal. It would then be possible for Wilson to continue working on his great plan of bringing about peace on the ground of the "freedom of the sea," that is, on the ground that, in the future, trade shall in no way be interfered with in time of war.

3. In due progress of events, he would in a proper case proceed against England. In the meantime, he is (cipher missing) assurances which Wilson is communicating to me through House, of the opinion that it would be easier to make peace than it would be to persuade England to give up her blockade.

This last could be brought about only as the result of war, the conditions essential to which are here lacking, as is well known. The imposition of an embargo on exports as a means of exerting pressure could not be brought about in view of public opinion here, because the prevailing prosperity would suffer as a result. Relying on House's report, Wilson believes, on the contrary, that our enemies will be willing to consider the question of peace. Basing my statement on the situation existing here, I repeat that there is only one way out of the dilemma, namely, that your Excellency empower me to announce here that we are willing to enter into negotiations with the United States concerning the conduct of the U-boat war, and that we would be willing to discontinue the U-boat war for the time being during the negotiations. This would result in the following advantage for us, that the resumption of the U-boat war, hanging like the sword of Damocles over the situation, would make it necessary for Wilson to start in with his peace plans at the earliest possible moment. Public opinion on this side, which longs for peace, would give him, in such case, strong support. However, in our announcement, we should *only* mention negotiations with the United States, for otherwise the anti-German ring would swing into action again and begin to incite public opinion against us on the ground of a "cattle deal."

4. If the presidential election were not imminent, Congress would perhaps help us, because it is against war. But as matters stand here, we shall drift on into war without hope of a rescue in case my proposal does not seem to justify acceptance, since the Democratic Party can not afford to desert their one candidate. In the meantime, Wilson will be constantly subjected to the influence of the peace point of view of Congress.

I renew my request that a sharp note be not sent to the American Government until the negotiations on this side have led to a satisfactory result.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, May 19, 1916.
Telegram No. 36.

WASHINGTON, May 15, 1916.

It is urgently requested that discussion of peace by our press be stopped in order to avoid any appearance that this government is mediating peace at our request. Period of quiet absolutely essential. In the meantime, this government will settle questions which are still pending with us in order to bring about quiet on their part also; further telegram follows through State Department.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, May 25, 1916.
No. 140.

WASHINGTON, March 14, 1916.

Since I have just received dispatches from your Excellency which were dated the 1st of November, I am afraid that my reports will lose practically all significance as the result of arriving much belated. With regard to the latest development of the Mexican question, the situation is just as it was when I wrote on the 18th of January of this year. President Wilson has acted with considerable skill on this occasion. If it comes to the point of formal intervention in Mexico, nobody can accuse him of having harbored warlike desires, or of having maneuvered for election purposes. On the contrary, it now looks as if Wilson had simply followed a spontaneous expression of the general will of the people. As a matter of fact, he would not really have been able to take any other course. It is true that Villa's action was very opportune for him. If certain anti-German papers state that we have paid Villa, there would be just as much justification for saying that the President had bribed him. Wilson's opportunity for being reelected has at one stroke been very materially improved. The fact which needs no comment whatsoever is significant, namely, that the New York stock exchange has greeted the invasion of Mexico by American troops with a rise in stocks of all the metal industries.

I have had some rather long and confidential conversations with Messrs. House and Morgenthau. It appeared as the result of these conversations and in connection with the internal political situation of the United States that Wilson's people are definitely relying on the fact that Roosevelt will be the Republican candidate, a fact of which I am not by any means so certain, since influential American circles do not want the savage Theodore and do not believe that he can be elected. At the same time, this assumption on the part of Wilson's friends has a certain significance, so far as we are concerned, because the President now entertains the belief that he can still get the German votes. It certainly would be a shame if any man of German inclinations should vote for Roosevelt. As the result of this train of reasoning, Mr. Wilson and his friend House have agreed to make the well-known pro-German Mr. Morgenthau the campaign manager of the Democratic Party. As to whether he will be able to get the German, Jewish and Irish votes will remain a question for the present. At the same time, it can not be denied that Mr. Morgenthau has very definitely taken our point of view over here, and that, in particular, he has told the President pretty plainly that it would be impossible for us to be conquered in this war. Wilson proposes, moreover, to handle the question of the arming of our enemies' merchant ships with as little expedition as possible. He and House look

upon it as the acme of wisdom *to do nothing*. The latter told me that Mr. (cipher missing) had sent his well-known note to our enemies on his own initiative and in so doing had brought about the whole unpleasant present situation; that now the only recourse was to let this delicate matter sink back into oblivion. This, too, is the effect of the Mexican incident.

I understood as the result of further remarks from Mr. House that Wilson intends to attempt in a few months to bring about peace in Europe—probably by making advances to the various belligerent Powers at the same time. This would only be possible if up to that time a conflict with the Central Powers could be avoided.

The above observations represent the situation here as it looks at the present moment. But emphasis must constantly be laid on the fact that we can rely with certainty upon nothing at a time which just precedes the presidential election. It is greatly to be regretted that under existing conditions it was impossible for us to come to a complete understanding with this government. Any moment may give birth to a new conflict, the result of which is wholly problematical. At the same time, at least this is certain, that Wilson does not wish to be drawn into the European War. House announced this fact in London and in Paris in such a way as to challenge any misunderstanding. It is possible that even the anti-German ring on this side will lessen its exertions to bring about war, if the interests of the metal industries are furthered by Mexican developments, and the press is thereby led off on a new tack. Much will also depend on the attitude of the German-Americans. As long as Wilson believes that he can gain their votes, he will insist in carrying out his wish of maintaining peace. That is practically all that the German-Americans want. I had an added opportunity of convincing myself of this when, some few days ago, I opened the German-Austrian relief bazaar in New York. This occasion was the most stupendous German manifestation which has, up to this time, taken place during the course of the war. The great hall in Madison Square Garden was filled with approximately 30,000 people who gave me an ovation such as I have never experienced in the United States. This attitude is explained simply because the efforts which have been made to maintain peace between the United States and ourselves have been successful up to the present time—and the chairman of the bazaar, Dr. Baruch, said this in so many words in his speech.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, June 7, 1916.

Telegram No. 44.

NEW YORK, June 2, 1916.

House is constantly working along the lines of your Excellency's telegram . . . (cipher garbled) since Wilson particularly desires to destroy the impression that Germany needs peace beyond all things, and that Wilson therefore is desirous of intervening on our behalf to a certain extent. The view is very generally entertained in governmental circles on this side that a decisive military victory is impossible for either belligerent to obtain. It is just for this purpose that Wilson desires to intervene, because he foresees an endless and useless shedding of blood and (cipher missing) losses.

House is continually asking me to impress upon your Excellency that we should give no indication of any great necessity of peace on our part since, otherwise, our enemies would maintain an attitude of non-receptivity. And besides this, what is wanted here is complete quiet and silence with regard to German-American relations, in order that the intervention contemplated may appear to have come about exclusively in the interests of the United States and of humanity.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, July 11, 1916.

WASHINGTON, May 17, 1916.

As I had the honor to report, the sharp exchange of notes with regard to the *Sussex* case left a bitter feeling here which must first be overcome before a favorable attitude toward us can be entertained. I am constantly engaged in cooperation with Colonel House to bring about this attitude; in the course of our efforts we are attempting to calm public opinion on the one hand, and on the other to put an end to other debated questions of lesser import which are now pending between our governments. If we bear in mind how sharp the opposition has been, we certainly should be thankful that a conflict has been avoided, and that we can now entertain the hope of keeping it definitely at a distance. The difference in opinion has been too great up to this time. We were looked upon as murderers and incendiaries over here and of being capable of committing any crime. For this reason, the concessions that we made were not believed; on the contrary, people simply took the position that we had at last promised to do better. On the other hand, we were fully justified in our attitude that the United States

had not been neutral, and that neither our reprisals, which were so sharply condemned over here, nor the so-called German plots would have been necessary if the Americans had maintained a neutral attitude. The best that can be said for this government is that it is at least more neutral than the influential circles on this side.

If, after all my disillusionments of the last two years on this side, I can once again look toward the future with a feeling of hope, I believe I am justified in doing so because the peace movement is gaining strength every day, and because England has made uncounted enemies here as the result of her behavior in Ireland. It is well known that the Democratic Party is very strongly influenced by the Irish, you could almost say that it was ruled by the Irish, and since last Easter Sunday the Irish have come over into our camp like one man. The government at once took advantage of this situation, and determined to take pointed steps against England with regard to a number of the blockade questions. So there now exists the prospect that President Wilson will adopt a more neutral attitude in the future, and will announce himself as the peacemaker in the next few weeks. Personally, I do not believe that we have anything to fear in the way of peace mediation by the United States, and this, because Mr. Wilson has constantly said that he simply wanted to give the impulse which should lead to peace and had no intention of meddling in domestic questions. To be sure, he desires to bring about disarmament on land and water. This war has shown what the superior German organization can do. Even our fanatical opponents on this side concede as much. I believe that we can rest in peace on the point of our enemies ever being able to meet us successfully on land, even if the future peace were somewhat to clip the wings of the so-called "militarism." In my opinion, the chief point to bear in mind is that as soon as the peace delegates take their places at the council table the Americans *must* join us unconditionally on the question of the freedom of the seas. Then there will be no question of any further passionate taking of sides, but the question of forcing certain interests; that is, the Americans, whether they want to or not, will have to protect international commerce from the English dominion of the seas in the future.

BERNSTORFF.

In the German papers and other publications of Europe, one often comes across the statements that public opinion in the United States is openly

pro-English. This view is incorrect, or at least has ceased to represent the fact for a considerable space of time.

A very respectable number of influential American newspapers which are either controlled directly by British money or by the American adherents of England, are still constantly attempting to make it appear as if the American people, with the sole exception of the German element—the much-maligned “hyphenated” Americans—are, in the present war, back of England practically to a man and make the British cause their own. Empty phrases of a solid Anglo-Saxon front in the pursuance of activities of true humanity as opposed to German barbarism, of the carrying-out of democratic ideals as against Hohenzollern tyranny, and of the pursuit of unselfish peaceful aims as against Prussian militarism which lusts for world dominion, play just as great a part in these efforts put out by the press as does the constantly reiterated assertion that America, for weal or woe, must rely upon England’s coming out victorious.

Such phrases as these in the newspapers must not cause us to adopt the belief that American public opinion, at least outside of the cities of Boston, Philadelphia and New York, is on the whole, more sympathetically inclined towards England than it is towards Germany. In the first months of the war it is true that England’s rôle of “champion of violated and desolated Belgium” caught the public feeling to a very definite extent. But later the sympathy for England dwindled away quickly and definitely, and particularly in the West and South, and in spite of a general somewhat nebulous “pro-ally sentiment,” public opinion has crystallized into the following conception more or less approaching complete neutrality, that “Germany is a murderer, but England is a thief.”

The possibilities resulting from this situation induced certain pro-English papers, as early as last autumn, to warn England that she should not allow herself to be deceived by the voices of the American press and not to believe that the public opinion on this side had any attack to make upon her. Particularly was this the case with the New York *Tribune*, the sworn adherent of England, which, in the course of an article which caused much comment, said that the attitude of the press of the Eastern States was not such as to justify an inference with regard to the attitude of the remaining American States or regarding the public opinion of the United States in general.

This warning was not given in vain. Since that time, as the St. Louis *Times-Democrat* jibingly remarked, England has “discovered the West.” The London correspondent of this paper reports “that now an Englishman who relies upon the comments of a few New York newspapers is looked upon with that blending of sympathy and contempt with which people are apt to treat an old hopeless crank, and that now well-informed Englishmen want to know what the Middle West thinks.”

The likelihood of energetic action on the part of the American federal government against Great Britain on account of the numerous British violations of the rights of neutrals gave the New York *Tribune* another opportunity sometime ago, to call the attention of its English friends to the actual stand taken by American public opinion. After the brief announcement of Secretary of State Lansing, that the concluding paragraph of the German note of the 5th of May shut out the possibility of any step on the part of the United States against England, an announcement which the greater portion of the American press received with enthusiastic approval, the announcement of the *Tribune* that some action of that kind was in spite of this, "unfortunately" imminent, might have succeeded of itself in awakening a feeling of amazement if it had not been known that many members of Congress, and particularly Representatives of western election districts, were insisting more and more strongly upon measures being taken against England, thereby acting in accordance with public opinion. But still greater amazement was caused by this paper on account of its ingenuous admission that the *démarche* which was about to take place was extraordinarily popular with all those Americans whose families had lived here from generation to generation. The following sentences of this long and remarkable article merit particular attention:

In this time there has seemed to be a strange confusion in the British mind over the situation. It seems to have been assumed in Great Britain that Mr. Wilson was acting in regard to Britain in a manner determined by American sympathy and by the fact that the mass of American public opinion was not only pro-Ally, but pro-British, and was willing to see American rights waived, because by the waivers the redress of the wrongs of Belgium, of France, of humanity generally, would be helped.

This is not the case. Conceivably the mass of the American people should have accepted the British point of view; conceivably the mass of the American people should have sympathized with Belgium and with France so completely as to be prepared to surrender rights or adjourn discussions of injuries. England has felt that America should sympathize with her as the soldier of Belgium. But the truth is that no large section of the American people has accepted this view. The *Tribune* has. The *Tribune* has never disguised its belief that the cause of all the Allies was inextricably bound together and that the Allied cause was the American cause.

Holding this view, however, the *Tribune* has never imagined that it had with it the majority, or any very considerable minority, of the American people. It has recognized that three wholly diverse elements in the American population contributed largely to the rejection by the American people of the idea that Great Britain is fighting for Belgium and for humanity and is unselfishly and quite chivalrously championing an unfortunate and suffering Belgian nation. These three elements are the native Americans of Revolutionary stock, the Irish and the Germans.

Now, such Englishmen as Lord Bryce wholly misrepresent the situation and deceive their countrymen when they undertake to give them the impression that there is profound affection in America and among large numbers of Americans for Britain or the British. . . . The truth is that the policy of "twisting the lion's tail" has always been popular with large fractions of the American population of true American stock.

As to the Irish and the German elements it is not necessary to enlarge upon the reasons for their antipathy to Great Britain. But it is worth pointing out again that they make up a large section of the population. They are all voters, they can all be rallied to a candidate who discloses hostility to Great Britain, and we are, it is worth remembering, on the edge of a political campaign. The Americans of anti-British prejudices in our population have never been prepared to support an attack upon Britain by the Administration while the German matter remained outstanding, but for a large section of the element the German matter is settled, and it is, to use the familiar phrase, "Britain's turn."

Further on, the paper pays reluctant tribute to the "German agents" because out of the "very real and very considerable anti-British sentiment" in the United States they have been able to make capital in many ways for Germany; and it censures England because in her foolish reliance upon the sympathy here which she felt sure that she would get she has failed to set on foot propaganda by which the real situation could be cleared up. The paper says with regard to the expected American step in London:

What has now happened was the expected. It would have happened in February, 1915, if the Germans had not insisted upon their submarine campaign. It was only adjourned by the *Lusitania*; it was only postponed by each subsequent tragedy. Now it is not only brought up by the German settlement or pseudo-settlement, but it is accentuated by the execution of the Irish rebels, which has supplied a new wave of sentiment to back Mr. Wilson in his attack upon British methods and for the moment put American abhorrence of German "terribleness" in the background.

The thing that the British have got to recognize is that if the Germans now give over their tactics of murder Mr. Wilson can, not only with political safety, but with political profit, attack their blockade, in so far as it affects American rights or even American conveniences. They must see that he will be supported in this by elements in the voting population that have been most hostile to him hitherto, and that so long as he is able to adduce the color of warrant for his contentions his course will be popular in many quarters and win him support in directions where he is most eager to get support.

The above-mentioned picture, which the ultra-British *Tribune* draws of the popular opinion on this side with regard to England, is certainly a very different one from that by which the American press, generally speaking, with the exception of a few really neutral publications, endeavors to mislead

its readers. Similar comments, though not half so frank, are occasionally to be found in the Washington correspondence of the *Evening Post* and in the leading articles of the prominent Springfield *Republican*, which admitted not long ago that, in consideration of the public opinion of the United States, nothing but an immediate conclusion of peace would prevent America from coming into serious conflict with England.

England's partisans in the Union have apparently discovered long ago that their cause is not in particularly good shape at present and, for this reason, have made great efforts during the last month to influence public opinion anew with friendly feelings toward England. The most powerful organization existing for this purpose consists of the "American Rights Committee," which includes in its membership a great number of influential anti-German elements which, by means of printed publications and public meetings and other methods, and also through rather unsuccessful obsequies celebrated in memory of the *Lusitania* victims, preaches a doctrine of hate against Germany. A demonstration of about 500 American "intellectuals" was made with the same end in view in the form of a manifesto which was printed in many of the newspapers, in which the cause of the Allied Powers was represented as that of the United States, and constituted a very poorly disguised call to arms in the interests of the Entente. Then, too, the lately revived literary activities of Viscount Bryce in the *New Republic* and in many popular Sunday papers with regard to the isolation of the United States and related themes, and, further, the wide-spread publication of the book, *The Challenge of the Future*, by the St. Louis Professor, Roland G. Usher, in which the necessity of an alliance between the United States and Great Britain is very convincingly set out, together with similar publications, treating of an assumed community of American-English interests or modes of thought, may have developed from these propaganda.

To what extent the pro-British coterie considered it necessary that energetic steps be taken to set American public opinion aright may perhaps be deduced from the fact that its members have engaged the Oxford Professor, Gilbert Murray, to deliver lectures here in July and August at Columbia University, and that, according to the New York *Herald*, he is going to give in connection therewith "a presentation of the British case . . . to try to correct misapprehensions which . . . have arisen in this country." Professor Murray, in complying with the request, will be doing here exactly the same thing at which England and the pro-British element of the United States took such offense when done by Dr. Dernburg.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, August 26, 1916.
Report No. 356.

WASHINGTON, July 19, 1916.

The arrival of the U-boat *Deutschland* was the first occurrence in the war, the reaction of which upon the United States may be considered as having been completely satisfactory. The attitude of the government was correct in all respects and public opinion expressed its approval and admiration in generous measure. All the attempts of our enemies to influence the government and the press fell short of their purpose. When I went to Baltimore to pay the *Deutschland* a visit, the reception which was accorded me there was like those which used to take place before the war. The mayor conducted me on a municipal steamer down the harbor to the *Deutschland* and gave me a banquet in the evening, during the course of which speeches of the friendliest kind were made. Captain König told me that his reception had been the same during the entire time of his stay in Baltimore. It really seemed as if the hatred and bitterness of the past two years had been forgotten in Baltimore. Even in New York, one of the strongholds of anti-German feeling, the arrival of the *Deutschland* worked like a charm. I was astounded by the great number of Americans of Anglo-Saxon strain who expressed their admiration for the exploits of our sailors and offered me their congratulations. Perhaps the most significant circumstance touching on the state of public opinion is that at the theaters, music halls and moving pictures, all the comic features and (cipher unintelligible) praised the *Deutschland* and at the same time made merry over the counter-measures taken by the British.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, September 8, 1916.
No. 375.

WASHINGTON, August 4, 1916.

Since the presidential election is only three months away, it occupies the foremost place in the public interest. Mr. Hughes has already started his campaign in good earnest. With the exception of taking a stand in favor of woman suffrage, Mr. Hughes introduced nothing new, so far as internal politics are concerned. His addresses were, in the main, concerned with attacks upon the Democratic Administration in the course of which the Mexican policy was made the chief point at issue. It is along this line that the Re-

publicans will deal their main blows during the election fight, because they will be wary of going into European questions, since it is in these that Wilson's greatest strength lies. Whenever you hear an American talking about the President, irrespective of whether he is blaming him or praising him, his comments invariably end with the remark: "He kept us out of war." This is and remains Wilson's trump card in view of the well-known fact that the American people is pacifically inclined to the last degree. In spite of all this, it looks as though Mr. Hughes ought to win unless some great surprise intervenes between now and the 7th of November.

Although the *Appam* question took such an unwished-for course, it is nevertheless true that the German-American relations are improving slowly but surely. The departure of the *Deutschland* is made the subject of very friendly comment in the entire press, and the debated question of the *Appam* would undoubtedly have been solved differently if it had been presented today for the first time. Unfortunately, when the government was called upon to make its first decision, it was at a time of the greatest feeling between the United States and Germany, and the well-known anti-German jurist, James Brown Scott, was left, therefore, with a perfectly free hand in making his report. It was perfectly natural that, in view of the political importance of the question, this report influenced the judge very strongly. But I am constantly entertaining the hope that the Court of Appeal will decide the matter differently.

If it is true that the attitude of the Americans has gradually improved, so far as we are concerned, it is equally true that the English have been of material assistance in this regard. The black list was looked upon here as an aggravation and even as a scandalous proceeding in the eyes of many Americans, and Casement's execution has made the Irish over on this side more savage than ever. As a result, the Democratic politicians exercised strong pressure on the government on account of the feeling of anxiety about their constituents, for the purpose of forcing the government to take some action against England. If no new causes of dispute arise between Germany and the United States, Wilson will find it necessary to show more backbone in his future dealings with England.

BERNSTORFF.

In spite of the fact that Mr. Charles Hughes has won no personal successes as the result of his election campaign, the first elections of this year which,

as always, are held in the state of Maine, have resulted in favor of the Republicans. Of course, it is true that Maine is a Republican State, so that the majority of 12,000 votes which was received by the successful candidate for governor does not constitute a certain indication, so far as the presidential election is concerned. We would only be able to draw a really definite conclusion as the result of what has occurred in Maine, if the Democrats had been victorious or if the Republican majority had been much greater than it was. It is calculated that 20 per cent of the former progressive votes went to the Democrats and 80 per cent to the Republican side. If the same result should follow in due proportion throughout the entire country, Mr. Wilson ought to win out by a small majority. As I have already had the honor to report, the outcome of the election is extraordinarily uncertain, and to prophesy one way or the other is a very risky proceeding. A fortnight ago, Mr. Wilson's chances appeared to be very good. It is very doubtful, however, as to whether the outcome of the great question of the railroad strike has won him more friends than enemies. If it is true that he won over the radical masses it is equally true that he lost many adherents among owners of railroad shares.

As is well known, foreign politics play a peculiarly important rôle in the coming presidential election compared with what is ordinarily the case on this side. On this account, this government is endeavoring to settle the Mexican question in time by means of the negotiations which are now under way in New London, but, to be sure, it appears very questionable as to whether Mr. Carranza will be able to really put the agreements which have been reached in New London into effect in Mexico.

It is the Irish vote which is giving Mr. Wilson the most worry. If these faithful henchmen of the Democratic Party desert him, he would lose every hope of victory. And it is this reason which in all probability, and above all, explains the fact that Congress has agreed to the adoption of administrative measures of retorsion against England, which Mr. Wilson will certainly have to apply if our enemies do not make concessions of their own accord.

The most certain method for Mr. Wilson to have adopted for the purpose of winning the reelection would have consisted in his giving an impulse to a peace move in Europe in time, if it had been possible for him to do so. Unfortunately, this anticipation was for the time being destroyed by the entrance of Roumania into the war. Our enemies' confidence in victory has increased, and is shared by our opponents on this side, as was made plain, in company with other indications, by the fact that the great New York banks required that our credits already secured by our financial institutions, should be covered. Even if we were to win new successes in the field against our latest enemy, it is probable that the favorable moment has passed for taking up the question of peace from this side before the election. As I have re-

ported elsewhere, it would look too much like an election maneuver if Mr. Wilson should definitely announce himself as peacemaker in the month of October. And moreover, our enemies would have small inclination to listen to him if they anticipated that election day would reduce him to a *quantité négligeable*. On the other hand, the resolutions with regard to measures of retorsion which have been adopted by Congress have put a weapon into his hand with which he can exercise strong pressure on England. Hence, it is still possible that Mr. Wilson may take some step with regard to peace before the election, but my personal belief is that he will continue to maintain a watchful attitude and will only take a definite step in case he is reelected.

BERNSTORFF.

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Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, December 13, 1916.
No. 530.

WASHINGTON, November 12, 1916.

The die is cast. After an unusually hard fight, President Wilson has been reelected by a very small majority. The Democratic Party has been successful in the Senate to the extent of a satisfactory majority, and both parties appear to be evenly balanced in the House of Representatives, so that the small number of independent members will be able to turn the scales either way.

As I have constantly reported during the last months, such a result was to be expected in the election, although previously the prospects for a Republican success appeared to be of the very best. If we ask for the reasons which succeeded in bringing victory to the standard of the Democratic Party, up to the present time numerically the weaker of the two, we may find it expressed primarily in Mr. Wilson's slogan, "Peace and prosperity." And, furthermore, there may be considered in this connection the course of political development which has reorganized the two old historic parties. This election makes it perfectly clear that we could correctly characterize the opposing parties by the European designations of "conservative" and "liberal." The Republicans were victorious in all those States in which capital is all-powerful, whereas the masses, particularly the laboring classes, on account of the 8-hour working day, voted for Wilson to a man. Capital exerted its entire influence on the side of Mr. Hughes because it expected that he would give them high tariffs as the result of which they might be able to hold fast, after the war, to the profits which had resulted therefrom. Particularly are Wilson's radical tendencies bitterly hated in Wall Street.

In spite of the reasons given above, Hughes would certainly have won by a

small majority if he had carried on his election fight with more shrewdness, and if, during this time, he had shut up his "friend" Roosevelt in a sanitarium for those afflicted with nervous trouble, or had used some other method to render him temporarily harmless. The Republicans were bound to win if they had been able to win over all the votes of the former Progressive Party, and besides these the Germans and the Irish, both of whom, as was well known, were very ill-disposed towards Wilson on account of his speeches against hyphenated Americans. Roosevelt completely ruined these prospects. Many of the Progressives voted for Wilson because their former leader had reached another understanding with the New York capitalists, and a great many Germans did the same because Roosevelt's war speeches increased in violence day by day. In spite of the fact that the German press took up for Hughes all the way through, Wilson obtained very material majorities in Milwaukee and St. Louis as, in fact, all over the West. I have already called attention to the fact in the course of my earlier dispatches that I looked upon Wilson's election as the more favorable outcome, so far as we were concerned. If I felt like expressing myself pessimistically, I should say that I looked upon Mr. Wilson as the lesser evil. I am still of the opinion that war would have been declared if we had had to deal with a Republican president at the time of the *Lusitania* episode. Mr. Hughes himself as much as confirmed this view in his election speeches. A Republican president would not have been able to withstand the concentrated onslaught of capital, of the American press, and of "society." It is certain that now, when Mr. Wilson owes his reelection to the pacifistic element, he will desire to dwell in peace with us. If on our side we are in the position to refrain from the so-called ruthless U-boat war, the success of which in any case is to the highest extent problematical, I believe that Wilson would do absolutely everything in his power to bring the World War to a rapid conclusion. If Mr. Hughes had been elected, he would assuredly have been obliged to take into his Cabinet some men of the Roosevelt group, and we would have been hard put to it in dealing with people like Root, Bacon, or Wickersham. The American tariff is, true enough, a matter for later consideration, but is to be kept in view just the same. It can be stated without exaggeration, once and for all, that for our purposes a Democratic Administration is better than a Republican. The bad feeling which exists in Germany against Wilson is in a certain sense fully justified. But he who has lived in the United States during this war knows that he is at least much better than the influential circles on this side. And it is exactly herein that the importance of the present election lies, in my opinion, that those elements which, generally speaking, command a great influence over American politics, and are through and through anti-German, have been defeated by the "little man" who is sincere, neutral, and peace-loving.

BERNSTORFF.

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 13, 1917.
Telegram No. 198.

WASHINGTON, January 4, 1917.

The efforts of our opponents to stir the United States up to the point of active support, and which had for the time being died down as the particular result of that change of attitude with regard to England which was brought about by the occurrences in Ireland, have become revived of late and are being carried on with the greatest activity, and are greatly assisted by constant reminders to the effect that in case the move for peace is unsuccessful, a break with Germany is probable. Irish elements are offering at the present time no determined resistance against this because they are generally reproaching Germany on the ground of ingratitude because she has entered the lists for Poland and Greece but has ignored Ireland. The moral indignation on Belgium's account expressed by the Entente affords us the best opportunity of playing the Irish against the British, on the theory that an independent but oppressed race has a greater claim to independence than the mixed population of Belgium. Official announcement that Germany recognizes the right of the Irish to free self-determination would satisfy the Irish completely and, on the contrary, would put England completely in the wrong in the eyes of the world, particularly here, and would hurt her badly. An announcement of this kind, which would find its counterpart in the British recognition of the Venizelos government, should, since in accordance with information current on this side the coming British governmental conference is about to grant Ireland self-government, appear at the earliest possible moment in order that this concession on the part of England would seem to be the result of the German announcement.

BERNSTORFF.

4. NOTE OF IMPERIAL CHANCELOR V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG

Note in manuscript

BERLIN, December 5, 1916.

The American chargé d'affaires handed me today the attached statement on behalf of the Belgian workers, and in connection therewith read me the following communication.

That he was instructed "to represent confidentially and very earnestly how seriously and unfavorably public opinion in the United States has been

reacted upon by these Belgian deportations at a time when that public opinion was approaching more nearly than ever before a balance of judgment as to the issues of the war. I am also to point out, and more particularly, the great embarrassment which that reaction has caused the President in regard to taking steps looking towards peace. The President is watching the whole situation with the utmost solicitude and has the desire and the definite purpose to be of service in that great endeavor at the earliest possible moment, and it has distressed him again and again to have his hopes frustrated and his opportunity to be of such service destroyed by such unfortunate incidents as the sinking of the *Marina* and *Arabic*¹ and the Belgian deportations. The President authorizes me to say that he noted with the deepest interest what your Excellency was good enough to say to me on November 2d, and I am to state that what the President most earnestly desires is practical cooperation on the part of the German authorities in bringing about a favorable opportunity for early and affirmative action by the President looking to an early restoration of peace."

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

[ENCLOSURE]

An answer to the memorandum concerning the question of Belgian unemployed is being prepared. The Secretary of State will not fail to hand it to the Embassy after his return from Headquarters.

The German Government, desirous of maintaining amicable relations with the United States, has given proof of its willingness to settle incidents arising between the two nations in a friendly spirit by the replies recently transmitted to the American Government in the *Marina* and *Arabic*¹ cases.

It is with great satisfaction that I have noted that the President of the United States so earnestly endeavors to be of service in the restoration of peace. Although my offers to open *pourparlers* for peace negotiations have so far not met with a favorable response from the other side, I hope the time will come when Germany's enemies will be more willing to lend an ear to the voice of reason. I am extremely gratified to see from the message you were good enough to deliver to me that in this event I can count upon the sincere and practical cooperation of the President in the restoration of peace, as much as the President can count upon the practical cooperation of the German authorities.

I have read the above memorandum to Mr. Grew today, who has taken the necessary notes.

B(ETHMANN) H(OLLWEG).

December 7, 1916.

¹ *Sic. (Arabia?)*—EDITOR.

5. STATEMENT OF MAJOR V. PAPEN, FORMERLY MILITARY ATTACHÉ IN WASHINGTON

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Statement of Major v. Papen to the Committee, Friday, April 16, 1920

Delegate Dr. Maxen in the chair.

The witness is sworn.

Witness v. PAPEN: I should like to be allowed to make a brief and connected statement of facts. I consider it of great importance to make it clear that it would have accorded in many ways with my expressed wish to have the proceedings of which I am the subject given full publicity, for reasons which I shall announce later. I may give as my chief reason that public opinion has constantly reproached me and my colleague of the Navy for having formed completely wrong estimates of the military and political situation in the United States and of not having maintained a loyal attitude to our chief, the then Ambassador. With regard to this point I desire to state the following: As military attaché and sole military representative of the Central Powers in the United States, it was of course impossible for me to confine myself to reports concerning the United States of a purely military nature; on the contrary, I considered it my duty to inform the General Staff and the War Department from time to time with regard to the political situation in the United States. But I never sent in a single report of a political character of which his Excellency the Ambassador was not informed. In fact I may say, and Count Bernstorff will confirm this, that we shared the same view, politically speaking, and that we have never differed in regard to our conceptions of the political situation. When I was called back from my post, I had an appointed conference with the Ambassador regarding the situation, as well as our views. It of course went without saying that I made a report of my estimate of the situation to my chief, former Chief of the General Staff of the Army, General v. Falkenhayn. I did this in the course of a two-hours' conference, the upshot of which was, generally speaking, that I expressed myself as follows: "General, if you do not succeed in keeping the United States from joining the coalition of our enemies, you will lose the war; on this point there can be absolutely no doubt. The enormous material and moral resources at the disposal of the United States are so wholly underestimated here that in my opinion it is above all things essential to enlighten public opinion to an extent quite different from that which has hitherto been the case."

Expert DR. BONN: Was this report by any chance made in writing? For it would be very useful to us if we could see it.

Witness v. PAPEN: This report was not made in writing; it was a conference which took place partly in the presence of my then colleague at The Hague, Major Renner. General v. Falkenhayn listened to this report and terminated

the interview with these words: "Bear in mind, if you please, that the Chief of the General Staff of the Army must calculate on the use of every instrumentality which is at his disposal, every military instrumentality which can be useful in winning the war; think this whole situation over once more, bearing in mind the uses to which a U-boat war can be put, and then come back to me here in twenty-four hours and give me your opinion once more." To which I answered: "General, I can make no changes in the statements which I have made to you; they are the result of an objective judgment covering one year and a half of the war, considered from the American perspective; my opinion can not be influenced by the fact that you, as Chief of the armies in the field, are bound to calculate upon the use of every instrumentality which can be useful in winning the war." I presented the matter in exactly the same way to his Excellency the Imperial Chancellor, and also to Secretary of State v. Jagow. And in this connection, I may call attention to the fact that Secretary of State v. Jagow expressed the view that as the result of my report it seemed to him very appropriate to inform public opinion through the press of the position which we took, and which was considered by us to be correct. I announced my readiness to confer with the representatives of the press who were present in Berlin, and to give them an interview setting out our views, and the situation on the other side. This interview, which I believe would have been very welcome to the Secretary of State, was not able to be had because the Chief of the General Staff, as the result of representations made by Major Nicolai (Chief of the Division of Information), would not consent thereto. I simply want to establish these facts because they serve, above all, to make it clear that I entertained exactly the same political views as the Ambassador with regard to how the United States should be handled, and have presented these views on this side also according to the best of my ability.

So far as my official activity in the United States is concerned, I may make the following statement: I was, as will be readily understood, first of all a soldier, and received my instructions and orders with regard to what I was to do or not to do from my military superiors. But of course it was again obvious that, in carrying out these instructions, I had to be bound by the limitations set by general international law and custom.

I may state at the outset that, regardless of the duties which were imposed upon me from the military-political side, it was always my endeavor—and, so far as I know, I always remained faithful to it—to do nothing within the territorial limits of the United States which would have been in conflict with the laws of the country or which could have resulted injuriously to the welfare of the United States on its own territory and soil, whose hospitality we were enjoying. Those cases, as the result of which I have been reproached with the violation of international law or even the law of the United States, all refer to incidents outside of the territorial limits of the United States, and

on territory hostile to us. It must be admitted that certain laws have been overstepped on certain occasions, but I must insist upon it that I have never entertained the thought of injuring the interests of the United States in any way in order to bring about any military or political advantage for us. This was always considered by us as a fundamental line of conduct.

Moreover, I may state in addition that, since I received certain duties to perform in the capacity of a soldier, I was naturally obliged to perform them without the slightest regard to my personal interests. So that if I became compromised in the course of carrying out any such instructions, the only result would be that I would personally be sacrificed to the situation. I went wherever I was sent. So far as I was concerned, that settled the question. This has always been so in the case of military attachés the world over, who of their own right are not entitled to avail themselves of diplomatic immunities.

But when people speak about my activities, which on the other side have been subjected to sharp criticism to such an extraordinary extent, I believe that they should be provided first of all with an objective picture of the entire field of hostile propaganda over there, and take the entire atmosphere into consideration. This is not the place for presenting you with the details of this picture, and you gentlemen are acquainted with all that happened and you also know, at least those gentlemen who were across the water know, how the game of hostile propaganda was played, and how it was manifested over there. But it would be very desirable to have the methods of the propaganda which were carried on against us once more clearly exposed to the public view. The Ambassador, too, was heard day before yesterday with regard to his own propaganda, and it is his opinion that we made by far too much use of propaganda over there. It is possible that that is the case; for from the beginning the Americans always looked upon our propaganda as "illegitimate." They have never considered it permissible for us to make representations in the American press or to the public generally of what we considered right, in any manner at all, no matter how legitimate. Everything that we ever did at that time, whether we wrote to the America papers, or whether German-American associations defended a given view, this was always denounced as "German propaganda" and to this "German propaganda" was always attributed the underlying purpose of indulging in illegal methods opposed to the interests of the Union. For this reason, it has always been tremendously difficult for us to present to the American people as much of our point of view as we considered just, and for the acceptance of which we were striving. It is from this starting point that one must proceed in order to appreciate the soil in which all the accusations against us, against me, grew. Not an inconsiderable portion of these accusations was the harvest of that soil which we had prepared by economic endeavors of a military-political nature.

When the war broke out, it was obvious that the time that it would last would depend very materially upon the extent to which the Entente would succeed in increasing its resources in the way of war material. The only country which could be considered in this regard was the United States. At that time, there were no real war industries in the United States; there were a few ammunition plants of ridiculously small capacity, and aside from this, nothing. I at once turned my attention, naturally, to the development of this situation, and I suggested to the Prussian War Department as early as September, 1914, to consider whether it would not be advantageous for Germany to get control of the war material production in the United States, which at that time was still very meager, to tie it up, and in this way to prevent any deliveries being made to foreign countries. At that time, the War Department did not accede to my suggestion.

Expert DR. BONN: Do you know why?

Witness V. PAPEN: No, I do not; I never received a word in answer to these proposals, but they probably estimated that the war would last a far shorter time than was the case. But finally matters developed so that the consumption of munitions and material during the war exceeded all previous experience, and assumed dimensions upon which even we in the General Staff had never counted. And so it was made all the more necessary for the Entente to depend upon the American market. I made note of this development. It was clear that it would have to be my duty, first, to observe this development and, secondly, to conceive means and methods of guiding it into channels which should be favorable to us. How was that possible? The sea was closed to us. To have war material produced for us, to buy it and have it transported to Germany was an absolute impossibility. The only possibility which remained open to us consisted in buying war material, holding it in the United States and so removing it from the hands of our enemies. Since, on account of the unwillingness of the Department, we had not succeeded in obtaining control for Germany of the few factories which were then in existence, another way had to be tried. This method consisted in buying it up.

Expert DR. BONN: At that time, did buying it up involve a comparatively-speaking small expenditure?

Witness V. PAPEN: Yes, in comparison with later war expenditures, it was a very small expenditure.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that in one report which was written at that time, you spoke of a maximum of \$100,000,000.

Witness V. PAPEN: Oh, no, much less. It was simply a question of a few factories of the smaller sort. Perhaps \$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000 would have been necessary. The economic measures which were now taken by us at my suggestion, for the purpose of limiting production of war material in the United States, were of two kinds. These were measures with regard to material and measures with regard to personnel. With reference to the

measures concerning material, it was a question, as I have already stated, of getting control of the majority of the war materials. For this reason, I suggested to his Excellency the Ambassador to build our own ammunition factory, giving it an American name and an American manager, and under this disguise, if I may use the term, to buy for ourselves to the greatest extent everything in the nature of war material which could be purchased in the American market. The most important item was to tie up for good and all the manufacture of artillery ammunition. This was only possible if we proceeded along this line. The United States was not at all in the position of turning out artillery ammunition to any material extent. In order to do this, it was necessary to build new factories. We saw how the Entente came into the market every day with their orders involving millions. The Americans were undecided for a long time as to whether they should take up such industries; for they were not at all sure as to how long the war would last. It was a very costly matter to build new plants of such dimensions. The entire costs of their new plants had to be met if possible by the profits of the first contract. As a result of the gigantic prices involved, this species of cattle-dealing went on for many months. The picture which was forming before me—that of the ultimate situation—became more and more clear. On this account, say in March or April, I went to the Ambassador with the request to solve this question in this way: that we should establish an American firm, and under cover of this firm should buy up everything which was necessary for the establishment of American munitions factories in the United States. Of first importance were hydraulic presses, such as are necessary for the production of artillery ammunition. If anybody wanted to build artillery ammunition factories in America, it was necessary for him to supply himself with these presses. We made a corner of such presses, as many as the United States could produce in two years' time, and claimed this entire output, so to speak, for our factory.

The same thing happened with powder. I bought up all the powder that the United States would be able to produce in the approximate future, and took it over for the purposes of the factory. We went still further. Orders for explosives were placed by the Entente in the United States in great volume. To meet this situation, new powder factories had to be built. In the next place, it was necessary, in order to manufacture explosives, to develop the coke industry, and that meant getting coke from tar products. At that time, America was hard put to it along this line. There were only a very few productive plants of this kind in existence, but there were plants which were being contemplated and which were being built by German engineers. For instance, there was the Otto Cook Oven Company, and there were other German firms which were the leaders in the market. I obtained information with regard to the building of these plants, got into touch with the engineers and the firms, and agreed with them that these

German engineers and firms should sever relations with these factories so that we delayed the completion of these plants for months.

New powder factories which were to be built needed as essentials to the business, acid-proof containers. Accordingly, I made long-term contracts with the industries which produced these containers in the United States, to tie up their deliveries for a space of from one year to eighteen months. We bought up all the chemicals on the market that we could get our hands on.

This perhaps will give you a picture in the main, of the measures taken by us with regard to the material. I could go into further details on this point, but it would not interest you.

On the side of personnel, the situation was the same. Naturally, the United States used in connection with this production of munitions and war material all the labor that it had at its disposal. The unskilled labor in the United States had to a great extent emigrated from here; he was either a German or an Austrian or a Hungarian; in any event, there were very many of this kind. It was essential for us to get these workmen out of the business. This thought was also a guiding consideration, namely, that these people who, to a great extent had still maintained their nationality, would have to have their attention called to the fact that, according to our penal law, they would make themselves liable to penalties if they produced war material for the armies of our enemies, or took any part in such production—provided that this was consciously done. The idea was to get these people out of these industries, in order to have them take up trades which would be useful for the purposes of peace. With this end in view, bureaus were established in all the industrial cities, to which these workers could come. The purpose of these bureaus was to place them anywhere where they could earn their living in pursuits of peace. In this way, we were successful in withdrawing a great number of German nationals from the war industries.

It resulted from all these measures taken, that when the Entente, after vacillating for a long time, finally placed her orders involving millions, etc., and American industry began to build their factories, it suddenly noticed that it could get nothing delivered at once, that the producers of presses, powder, toluy, etc., said: "We can only deliver in a couple of months; our output is bought up." Everywhere, difficulties were met with. Then people said: "What's the matter; some great American trust must be standing in the way; some great American business deal which wants to get all the business for itself." The matter was investigated and traced back up to the purchase of the factory, under cover of which we had made this corner; at that time, in the summer of 1915, it was still looked upon as absolutely American. But then it was that the well-known papers were stolen from Privy Counselor Albert by agents of the American federal secret service, amongst which were found my accounts with the Bridgeport Projectile Company, as well as accounts with regard to different purchases in this line.

Then the whole lay of the situation at once became plain to the Entente and the American public. You can readily imagine, gentlemen, that in view of the kind of propaganda which was carried on against us by the Entente, and by Americans who were friendly to England, it was not exactly a quieting factor when the public realized how we had been leading them around by the nose. From the reports of the statisticians which I gathered with regard to the exporting of war materials from the end of 1915, you can see that we worked with very good success. Up to the end of 1915, the export of war materials had in the main been held down to a quite insignificant amount. In bringing this about, I had carried out the instructions of my Chief on the General Staff, who had transmitted the following order to me: "If you succeed in reducing the deliveries of war material to a certain extent by the United States to the Entente up to the end of 1915, we shall probably then have won the war." I had to work along these lines and I did so work, and if the press got into a turmoil about it, it was quite explainable why it did so.

Expert DR. BONN: Have you these figures?

Witness v. PAPEN: The figures must be in the records of the General Staff or of the War Department. I sent the exact statistics every month to Berlin in the years 1914 and 1915.

I would also like to make the following remarks with regard to the investigation which the American Senate made covering all these matters, before we pass over to the details of this investigation. In the course of his hearing, Count Bernstorff has already called attention to the fact that the quite general excitement concerning the so-called plots and conspiracies had completely died down at the end of 1915 after my departure. In 1916 things were quite calm in the United States on this point. The fairy tales about plots were dug up again on the occasion of the breaking off of relations with Germany, for the purpose of bringing about the entrance into the war, heart and soul, of those least belligerently inclined. Any and every means was made use of for this purpose, and everything that had ever been brought up against us, such as the hundred factories which I was supposed to have blown up through my agents in the United States, the conspiracy with Mexico, and many other matters, were served up warm again in the newspapers, and were spread broadcast in the shape of pamphlets which, to a certain extent, acquired an official character through the "Committee on Public Information." Even the investigation by the Senate Committee, concerning which this large volume has been written, was not carried on in an unprejudiced way in very many particulars. Let me cite a case in proof of this. One of the examiners on the occasion of these investigations was Deputy Attorney Becker; among other matters, he investigated the celebrated Bolo case. In the course of his comments which he gave out to the American press as the result of the investigation of the Bolo Pasha case, he spoke in the year 1918 somewhat as follows:

When Bolo Pasha came to New York, his arrival was closely followed by a dinner at which Mr. William Randolph Hearst, the well-known newspaper man, Bolo Pasha, and some other people were present. The principal conspirators and plotters, the German military attaché v. Papen and the naval attaché Boy-Ed, were also present at this dinner.

I note that this dinner took place two years after I was recalled from the United States. The reason for this wilfully false statement of the examining attorney is not to be found in the fact that they wanted to do me any particular harm by connecting me with the Bolo Pasha case, but it exists merely in the field of American internal politics. For we must realize that internal politics have continually played the chief part in the whole matter.

It would be going too far afield to explain here the internal political reasons why it was sought to mention my name in connection with Bolo Pasha.

A few moments ago I ventured to state that German propaganda was always objected to as illegitimate by the Entente-American press. Gentlemen, if you will read this book of the Senate Committee, you will perceive that every one who from the year 1914, when the war began, up to the entrance of the United States into the war, had written any neutral article expressing friendliness to Germany, and who was cited before the sessions of the Senate, had to avail himself of the excuse that if at any time while the United States was still neutral he had ever dared to find a kindly word to say about Germany, he certainly would have been misunderstood. And if he was ever actually forced to admit that he had done such a thing, he attempted to weaken the effect of it by some such statement as this: "As proof of the fact that as an American I have only had feelings of kindness for the Entente, I can point to the circumstance that I have strained my credit up to the breaking point in order to invest so-and-so many million dollars in war loans." Read the book, gentlemen, and you will find on every page that people who, by any possibility, could be made the subject of suspicion of having harbored friendly feelings towards Germany always said: "For heaven's sake, do not put my name into the book; I have never been friendly to Germany, I have never had a good word to spare for the Germans." That is the foundation on which these investigations were built up. And the evidence was mostly gathered together by the use of unlawful methods and by informants. And in this connection, it may be still further stated that as early as 1915, and long before there was any talk of war, the United States kept the telephone systems of all members of the Embassy, perhaps with the exception of those of his Excellency, under surveillance; that all my conversations with the State Department were known, and that I was constantly pursued by government detectives under conditions and in such a way as, in all truth, is impossible to associate with any idea of neutrality.

His Excellency v. ROMBERG: Let me interrupt for a moment. Did you

get the impression that the representatives of the Entente received different treatment in connection with the propaganda question?

Witness v. PAPEN: Obviously. Why, it never occurred to a single human being to treat the British military attaché in the way that I was treated; never. On the contrary, he had constantly at his disposal the full support of the secret service of the United States Government in all the measures that he undertook. And moreover, you never heard anything about any English propaganda over there, although it was carried on to a most all-inclusive extent. For instance, we know about the celebrated conference which, I believe, took place on the 23d of August, 1914, in which the British propaganda service adopted a definite policy in the matter of coloring the American press, and whereat it was determined to appoint English editorial writers on forty American newspapers. This session took place in the office of J. P. Morgan; that it took place has always been denied; that it did take place is nevertheless true. We know absolutely that it did take place. And over all these occurrences the veil of love was cast. On the other hand, they went against us to such an extent that they not only had us constantly under observation, but that the American-British secret service continuously set people off on my track, with offers of sabotage for the purpose of compromising me. People used to come and say: "Here is a wonderful opportunity; it will be an easy matter for you to blow up such-and-such a factory; give me a thousand dollars, for I not only can do it but will do it; that will mean a good deal to you with your government." Numerous cases of this kind occurred.

Moreover, it is announced with the utmost ingenuity in this book of the Senate Committee that the official secret service, of which I have already spoken, had stolen the Albert papers which made public our commercial dealings. This fact exists as a matter of record—so done in August or July, 1915.

Another case which occurs to me: General Leonard Wood, one of the most prominent people in the United States and for long years Chief of Staff and in my time in command of the district of New York, sent word to me one day to come and see him at Governor's Island. He was, as always, very friendly with me and said smilingly: "A couple of people were here a few minutes ago and gave me exact information about a plan which you, Mr. v. Papen, have apparently worked out; it consists in the fact that, if the Germans land here with their submarines, they are going to blow up the subway and the water-mains and water system, etc. We have the drawings exactly reproducing where you are going to lay your explosives, the exact points you are going to destroy; all the material is here, if it interests you." We didn't waste another word about this matter. But it shows how they went to work in those days.

Another case: Since at the time of and before the war I had been military

attaché in Mexico, attempts were always made to lay at my door the supposed fact that I had tried by means of various plottings to stir up the Mexican Government or public opinion in Mexico against the United States, in order to embarrass to a certain extent the export of war material by creating the possibility of a conflict. So they alleged and published in all the papers that I had been in touch with President Huerta when he came to New York at that time. I never saw him on American soil, although I did in Mexico before the war, but never in America—never, not even once. All these representations were invention, pure and simple.

On the contrary, my reports were never such as to leave any possibility for a doubt to exist about the hopelessly distracted situation in Mexico which shut out the possibility of any capacity for an alliance.

As stated, the outstanding characteristic of all this press campaign which was launched against us, all these plots which were ascribed to us, is that in the end they were finally traced back to a minimum. The fundamental fact does not exist, and in so saying I rely upon the evidence which Count Bernstorff submitted a short time ago, the evidence of a certain Judge G. W. Anderson, who has investigated a great part of these cases and openly announced here on the 28th of January of this year:

Now I assert as my best judgment, grounded on the information that I can get, that more than 99 per cent of the advertised and reported pro-German plots never existed. I think it is time that publicity was given to this view.

And at the end of this announcement, he adds:

For the root of our troubles today is lying, official lying, unofficial lying, deliberate lying, and imitative lying.

This characterizes the situation to a certain extent. •

PART VII.—THE FINAL DECISION WITH REGARD TO THE
UNRESTRICTED U-BOAT WAR OF JANUARY 9, 1917

212

Protocol of the session of January 8, 1917, at the Headquarters of General v. Hindenburg¹

Strictly confidential.
For manual delivery.

Present: General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg.
General Ludendorff.
Colonel v. Bartenwerffer.
Admiral v. Holtzendorff.
Captain of the Navy Grasshoff.

Admiral v. HOLTZENDORFF: Makes another brief summary of the two documents to General v. Hindenburg (see notes in handwriting of Admiral v. Holtzendorff).

General FIELD MARSHAL: Declares that he is in absolute accord with the matters above presented.

v. HOLTZENDORFF: My plan agrees with the conditions for the limited U-boat war announced by the Chancellor in September. The difficulties are all on the side of our diplomacy, which has run into a snag. The note with regard to armed steamers will be given out today, as the Chancellor told me today over the telephone. The Chancellor said that he had only learned now for the first time by means of the memorial, that the destruction of armed steamers could only bring us so small an increase.

General LUDENDORFF: That does not agree with what he said here.

v. HOLTZENDORFF: The Chancellor wanted to stop the note with regard to armed steamers, by telegraph. I refused this. The Chancellor then requested that the publication of the order be put off until tomorrow. I promised to do this on the condition that the note was issued. (Admiral v. Holtzendorff then commented about the dates of the 15th of January and 21st of January.)

General LUDENDORFF agrees to this.

v. HOLTZENDORFF comments about the difficulties of the question of the passenger steamers. He says that the Chancellor thought that he wanted to set a U-boat trap for him.

FIELD MARSHAL: I, too, was from the beginning against the note on account of the armed steamers.

v. HOLTZENDORFF submits the new instructions to Bernstorff, together with Hindenburg's changes. It appeared that the changes had been accepted. The Field Marshal expresses satisfaction that the sentence with regard to blockade had been eliminated.

¹ From the records of the Supreme High Command of the Army.

v. HOLTZENDORFF states that America will exercise no pressure on England. He puts the question: Are there any objections to my orders?

LUDENDORFF: Is it possible to have side-wheelers go to Holland from England?

v. HOLTZENDORFF: If America agrees to negotiate, we can meet her in the question of passenger traffic. The American steamers can come to Falmouth and the Dutch side-wheelers to Harwich. Then he explains the map of the restricted area and gives the number of U-boats on the 1st of February.

General LUDENDORFF: Does the fleet need U-boats for its own safety?

v. HOLTZENDORFF: Yes, but they are subtracted. At any rate the fleet's own measures for security are being limited. Our increase in U-boats will far outnumber the probable losses. The necessary reserves are, then, on hand. He then reads the report of Naval Attaché v. Fischer-Lossainen concerning the views in Sweden with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war. He wanted to read that to His Majesty too, who had been very doubtful. The same with regard to the naval attaché at The Hague. . . . He thought that it appeared therefrom that neutral shipping would allow itself to be scared away to a very material extent. He then took up the Kalkmann memorial and continued: The reasons for the unrestricted U-boat war are so conclusive that the Chancellor must give in. But if this Chancellor participates in the unrestricted U-boat warfare, the prospect of America not taking part in the war is greater than if a different Chancellor took his place. He then stated: "I shall submit the order about firing upon armed steamers to His Majesty the Emperor today and tell him that Field Marshal v. Hindenburg is in absolute agreement and say that the order would not go out until tomorrow.

FIELD MARSHAL agrees to this.

v. HOLTZENDORFF: I will today read my letters to Field Marshal v. Hindenburg to His Majesty, who this noon had no real conception of the situation.

FIELD MARSHAL agrees to this.

v. HOLTZENDORFF reads the draft of the note announcing the unrestricted U-boat warfare and hands the Field Marshal a copy.

General LUDENDORFF agrees.

v. HOLTZENDORFF: The Chancellor arrives here tomorrow.

FIELD MARSHAL: What are his troubles?

v. HOLTZENDORFF: The Chancellor wishes to keep in his own hands the diplomatic preparation of the unrestricted U-boat war in order to keep the United States out of it. The Chancellor had characterized the note with regard to armed steamships as a U-boat trap which would bring the conflict with the United States.

General LUDENDORFF: But the Chancellor knew all that.

V. HOLTZENDORFF: The Foreign Office thinks that if the United States came in, South America would come into the war too. And besides this, they are thinking about the times which will follow the conclusion of peace.

FIELD MARSHAL: We must conquer first.

General LUDENDORFF: To characterize the note concerning firing on armed steamers as a U-boat trap is just another attempt to put matters off.

V. HOLTZENDORFF: What shall we do if the Chancellor does not join us?

FIELD MARSHAL: That is just what I am racking my brain about.

V. HOLTZENDORFF: Then you must become Chancellor.

FIELD MARSHAL: No, I can not do that and I will not do it; I can not deal with the Reichstag.

V. HOLTZENDORFF: In my opinion, Bülow and Tirpitz are out of the question on account of their relations with the Emperor.

General LUDENDORFF: I would not try to persuade the Field Marshal.

FIELD MARSHAL: I can not talk in the Reichstag. I refuse. What about Dallwitz?

General LUDENDORFF: You mean, whether he wants the U-boat war at all?

V. HOLTZENDORFF: The Chancellor has the confidence of foreign nations to a great extent.

FIELD MARSHAL: Well, we shall hold together, anyway. It simply must be. We are counting on the possibility of war with the United States, and have made all preparations to meet it. Things can not be worse than they are now. The war must be brought to an end by the use of all means as soon as possible.

V. HOLTZENDORFF: Again, His Majesty has no real conception of the situation or of the feeling among his own people.

LUDENDORFF: That is true.

V. HOLTZENDORFF: People and the Army are crying for the unrestricted U-boat war.

General LUDENDORFF: That is true.

V. HOLTZENDORFF: Secretary of State Helfferich said to me: Your method leads to ruin. I answered him: You are letting us run headlong into ruin.

FIELD MARSHAL: That is so. The great point for me is that it does not constitute an operation which weakens us in any other spot, speaking from the military standpoint.

V. HOLTZENDORFF: I have information that Russia will collapse if she is attacked on the north.

Remarks of a personal nature follow.

*Report of the conference between Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg,
General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg, and General Ludendorff,
at Pless, January 9, 1917*¹

The CHANCELOR: If His Majesty commands that a ruthless U-boat war shall be launched, the Chancellor will endeavor to succeed in keeping America "out of it." For this purpose, certain concessions already taken up previously with the Admiralty Staff would have to be made. But we will have to calculate upon America's entrance into the war against us.

The Chancellor feels more assurance about the attitude of the European neutrals. Our peace note has brought good results. Holland and Denmark will not enter the war, at least not as long as they do not see that the U-boat war brings us no success.

With regard to Switzerland, we shall have to bear in mind the possibility that the Entente will bring pressure to bear on Switzerland if food becomes scarce in that country, to make it possible for French armies to march through or even for Switzerland to join the cause of the Entente.

Denmark will possibly lay up its shipping.

The Chancellor requests that the military measures which are to be taken with regard to the neutral boundaries, and particularly with regard to the Danish boundary, be such as not to carry the implication of excessive menace.

General LUDENDORFF: The purpose is just to detail a few regiments of cavalry to the borders.

CHANCELOR: The determination to launch the unrestricted U-boat war depends, then, upon the results which we may expect. Admiral v. Holtzendorff assumes that we will have England on her knees by the next harvest. The experiences of the U-boats during the last few months, the increased number of U-boats, and England's bad economic situation, will at least increase our chances of success.

On the whole, the prospects for the unrestricted U-boat war are very favorable.

Of course, it must be admitted that those prospects are not capable of being demonstrated by proof.

We should be perfectly certain that, so far as the military situation is concerned, great military strokes are insufficient as such to win the war.

The U-boat war is the "last card." A very serious decision. "But if the military authorities consider the U-boat war essential, I am not in a position to contradict them."

FIELD MARSHAL: We are ready to meet all eventualities and to meet America, Denmark, Holland, and Switzerland too.

¹ From the records of the Supreme High Command of the Army.

The restricted U-boat war on commerce will only bring about a slight increase in the results reached up to this time. We need the most energetic, ruthless methods which can be adopted. For this reason, we need the ruthless U-boat war to start from February 1, 1917.

The war must be brought to an end rapidly, although we would be able to hold out still longer, but haste is needed on account of our allies.

CHANCELOR: It may be imagined that the U-boat war might postpone the end of hostilities.

General LUDENDORFF: The U-boat war will also bring our armies into a different and a better situation. Through the lack of wood needed for mining purposes and for lack of coal, the production of ammunition is hard-pressed. It means that there will be some relief for the western front. We must spare the troops a second battle of the Somme. That this relief will come about will be proved by our own situation and the effects of our transportation crisis.

And, too, Russia's power of initiative will be detrimentally affected by the lack of ammunition which will result from shortage in tonnage. The Siberian railroad alone will not be sufficient for Russia's needs.

CHANCELOR: America's assistance, in case she enters the war, will consist in the delivery of food supplies to England, financial support, delivery of airplanes and the dispatching of corps of volunteers.

FIELD MARSHAL: We can take care of that. The opportunity for the U-boat war is such that it can perhaps never become as favorable again; we can carry it on and we must carry it on.

CHANCELOR: Of course, if success beckons, we must follow.

FIELD MARSHAL: We would reproach ourselves later if we let the opportunity pass by.

CHANCELOR: The situation is certainly better than it was in September.

General LUDENDORFF: The measures of security taken against the neutrals will have nothing about them in the nature of a challenge; they will be purely defensive measures.

CHANCELOR: And suppose Switzerland came into the war, or that the French were to come through Switzerland.

FIELD MARSHAL: That would not be unfavorable from a military standpoint.

For the Chancellor,

V. BARTENWERFFER.

NUMBER 6

PART VIII.—THE ENTRANCE OF THE UNITED STATES INTO THE WAR

1. FROM THE BREAKING OFF OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS UP TO THE DECLARATION OF WAR

214

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau

Telegram No. 230.

BERLIN, February 5, 1917.

Ambassador Gerard has just informed me, in accordance with instructions received from his government, of the breaking off of diplomatic relations on the part of the United States of America, and has asked for his passports.

ZIMMERMANN.

215

Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, February 6, 1917.

Telegram No. 61.

VIENNA, February 5, 1917.

Ambassador Count Tarnowsky has wired Count Czernin that Lansing had communicated to him the breaking off of relations with Germany and had remarked at the same time that it was Wilson's desire not to break off relations if this were possible. With this end in view, it would be desirable, if possible, for modifications to be adopted in the methods of carrying on the U-boat war, and if the Austrian note of announcement, which Wilson has kept secret up to the present time, could be changed accordingly. Lansing characterized all this as desirable, but did not state that it constituted a condition, and asked for an immediate reply.

Since time presses, Count Czernin has sent the attached telegram to Lansing through the American Ambassador here:

Ambassador Count Tarnowsky has informed me of the friendly words of sympathy which you have expressed for the Monarchy, and I venture to communicate to you herewith my heartiest thanks.

I, too, would be glad to see it if the diplomatic relations between the United States and ourselves could be continued. In order to bring this about, I request the American Government before all else to consider the situation which we now occupy.

We have declared openly and honorably that we are only conducting a war of self-preservation, that is, that we are ready to take up the question of an honorable peace in which there shall be neither conqueror nor conquered, and we still hold out this proposal today. The basis according to which there shall be neither conqueror nor conquered is one which has been proposed by Mr. Wilson himself, and it therefore behooves the Entente, as it does us, to take our stand upon it from this time on. As long as the Entente holds fast to the program openly announced in its last note, which includes the partition of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, it is impossible for us to discuss peace and is necessary for us to defend ourselves, making use of all the means available for the purpose.

A technical change in the U-boat war which has been launched is impossible. In the first place, we should only be able to do so after negotiations with our allies; furthermore, and this is of chief importance, the numerous U-boats are already on the high seas and it is quite impossible to reach them with any message of any kind.

The essence of the question is to be found, in my opinion, in this, that Mr. Wilson, who was the one to propose a peace without conqueror and without conquered, is now morally bound to induce the Entente to accept this basic principle as we have done. The President is fully qualified to bring this about—in the first place, on account of his lofty position and the personal respect in which he is held throughout all of Europe, and also because the United States, by stopping war deliveries to the Entente, can induce the latter to act in conformity with Mr. Wilson's will.

I therefore hope that the President of the United States will carry on the peace work which he has commenced, from an unbiased and objective standpoint and, above all, that he will persuade the Entente to take her stand upon the American basic principle, just as we have done, according to which there shall be no conqueror and no conquered, and as the result of which the peace which will come to both parties in the conflict will be all the more honorable and lasting for the entire world. If the President does this, not only will the terror of the U-boat war, but the war itself, come to a sudden end, and the President will find his name written in the history of all mankind in letters that will never fade.

I venture to request that you will inform Ambassador Count Tarnowsky of the above and that you will send me your answer in due course.

Count Czernin added that he believed that his reply corresponded with the spirit of our last reply to Wilson,¹ in which we had promised to desist from the U-boat war if Wilson would guarantee a peace conference. Ambassador Penfield was tragically eloquent in expressing his anxiety lest he would have to leave Vienna and, moreover, announced that he entertained the hope of being able to maintain diplomatic relations, to which Count Czernin answered him that the decision on this question would have to be made in Washington, that our action had been carefully considered and was not to be changed. I ventured myself to remark that the more evidence that we

¹ 72, Supplements, pt. I, *ante*, p. 1048.

gave of firmness, determination, and self-confidence, the less would be the danger of the neutral Powers joining against us.

WEDEL.

216

Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, February 6, 1917.

Telegram No. 62.

VIENNA, February 6, 1917.

Count Czernin told me yesterday that the note of announcement concerning the U-boat war, well known to us, had been immediately handed over in Washington in due course, but that up to the present time this fact had been kept secret by Mr. Wilson.

Count Czernin expects that Wilson will eventually break off relations with Austria, too, in view of the answer which was directed to Lansing and which was reported yesterday. If Wilson does not reach this conclusion, the only way in which he will be able to explain it will be that Wilson broke off relations with us because he had already committed himself personally too far not to do so, and hoped to exert pressure upon us for purpose of bringing about modifications; but that Wilson, after this attempt proved useless, was already planning not to go any further and to keep Count Tarnowsky in Washington in order to continue a liaison with the Central Powers, to prevent the situation from becoming more critical and in order to be able to continue with his peace policies. Under these circumstances, Count Tarnowsky could be useful there, and he hoped that his remaining there would agree with our wishes in the matter. Kindly send instructions as a guide to my further discussions.

WEDEL.

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Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Wedel

Telegram No. 82.

Re telegrams 61 and 62.¹

For the guidance of your Excellency's further discussion.

BERLIN, February 6, 1917.

Count Czernin's communication to Wilson is hardly such as to voice the spirit of our last note.² We did not promise to desist from the U-boat war in case Wilson guaranteed a peace conference, but as soon as full security

¹ 215 and 216, *ante*, p. 1322, and *supra*.

² 72, Supplements, pt. I, *ante*, p. 1048.

should be given us, that the President's activities would lead to such a peace as would be acceptable to us. Nor did we state that we would be satisfied with a peace without conqueror or conquered. We would only be able to carry out even our moderate demands in the capacity of conquerors.

Although I appreciate Count Czernin's wish to avoid a break with the United States, nevertheless I believe that too friendly an attitude on the part of the Austrian Government would be objectionable, in view of the openly announced efforts on the part of the President to differentiate between us and Austria-Hungary. Thus far, not a single word has been announced against Austria-Hungary in Washington. Wilson's present attitude, however, shows him in his true light, that of an adherent of the Entente at all costs. His purpose to throw military obstacles in our way is apparent. As a mediator, he would exert all his influence against us.

ZIMMERMANN.

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Telegram of Count Czernin to the Imperial and Royal Embassy in Berlin

Rec. Berlin, February 8, 1917.

I was perfectly well aware that the expression which I used purposely when in touch with Mr. Lansing, of a peace "which includes neither conqueror nor conquered," goes beyond the limits of the declarations which we have made up to the present time. I particularly selected this expression because it had been coined by Mr. Wilson and because I consider it of the greatest importance to put Mr. Wilson in an inconsistent position with regard to the Entente. In view of the recent categorical announcement of the English Premier, that the war could not be allowed to terminate without a conqueror, Mr. Wilson would have a pretty hard time in explaining to the world that we were the people who had placed obstacles in the way of peace.

On the other hand, the term which I have used can not result disadvantageously. Of course, the Entente would not recede from its attitude now; every proposal will be useless because, being rejected, it will not be binding upon us in any way, so far as the future is concerned.

But if we make it possible as the result of my answer to Wilson—in which he has simply been handed out words instead of the required facts—for relations between the United States and us to be maintained, I shall look upon this as a very great advantage, and in fact just as helpful to Germany as it will be for us.

Marginal note of Secretary of State ZIMMERMANN:

Delivered by Prince Hohenlohe. I announced that I was in accord with the final paragraph, but for the rest, expressed myself in accordance with

our instructions which were sent to Vienna. For the records. Z(IMMERMANN). *February 8.*

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Secretary of State Zimmermann to Counselor of Legation v. Grünau
 Telegram No. 272. BERLIN, *February 8, 1917.*

Minister at Berne telegraphs under No. 211:

Swiss Government received today the following telegram from Washington:

In agreement with Count Bernstorff for German Government. Here strong desire and actively manifested necessity of avoiding war; as result of this Bartelme's radio cable¹ of yesterday's *Kölnische Zeitung*. In case Berlin inclined to conference with Union with regard to blockade, I would be ready to follow up matter further here and believe in this way war could be put off for the present. Minister Ritter.

ROMBERG.

In agreement with the Admiralty Staff of the Navy, I propose to answer as follows:

Germany, as before, ready for negotiations with America provided that the blockade against our enemies' commerce shall not be interrupted.

By an answer of this kind, we would be making no concessions with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war. By the use of the words "as before" we would repeat in an inconspicuous way our proposal with regard to granting free passage to American passengers bound for England. On the other hand, the somewhat vague terms of the answer would be such as to make negotiations possible, and in this way at least to put off the war with the United States. That, as a matter of fact, America desires to avoid war seems to me to be made clear by this, that up to the present time she has not fully decided to break off relations with Austria-Hungary, although it is well known that the Vienna Government has sent a message to Washington which is identically the same as our U-boat note.

After conferring with the Supreme High Command, kindly request the Emperor's consent with regard to the instruction in question.

ZIMMERMANN.

¹ 220, *post*, p. 1327.

220

Kölnische Zeitung, February 13, 1917 (noon edition)

Washington, February 7 (telegram from our own correspondent.
Arrival delayed).

Although the relations with Germany have been broken off, the situation is developing along promising lines. The general feeling is one of quiet and is very favorably affected by the news from Berlin, according to which Americans in Germany are being treated with the greatest consideration. It is generally appreciated that both nations are for the moment groping in the dark with regard to their mutual attitudes and purposes. The *Evening Post* announces that it is now certain that Berlin will not look upon the breaking off of relations as a mortal insult, which can call for no other answer than that of a declaration of war. . . .

221

Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, January 9, 1917.

Telegram No. 188.

Re telegram No. 272.¹

Rush.

PLESS (HEADQUARTERS),
February 8, 1917.

His Majesty agrees to the instructions which it is intended to send the Swiss Minister in Washington, provided that our entrance into negotiations is made to depend upon the condition that Count Bernstorff and Gerard return to their posts.

The Emperor argues as follows: Wilson's *démarche* has been carried out in order that England may be protected against the U-boat war and to force us to give in as the result of pressure exerted by him and the European neutrals—that he did not desire war or, if he did, only in case the remaining neutrals would join him and could be brought into line. After it has been seen that the neutrals will become reconciled to the U-boat war, and will not declare themselves on the side of England, then we will find the inclination to pull in the reins in order to avoid the danger in some other way. That we should make use of the disadvantageous position into which the United States has brought itself, by demanding satisfaction for the affront which it has offered us by relying on our alleged bad faith and therefore breaking off diplomatic relations prematurely. That, if the United States now wants to take up the question of negotiating once more, she will have to do so by

¹ 219, *ante*, p. 1326.

immediately allowing the normal media of international intercourse to resume their functions.

The Supreme High Command of the Army agrees to the instructions.

GRÜNAU.

222

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Wedel

Telegram No. 94.

BERLIN, February 11, 1917.

It would be without doubt a matter of great interest to us to put off a declaration of war on the part of the United States as long as possible. But in this connection I consider it essential to state as a fact, and ask that this point be emphasized in conversations with Count Czernin, that so far as we are concerned, Wilson's rôle as mediator is finished. If the President were to come to us with renewed proposals of this nature, we would reject them unqualifiedly.

In case the United States should declare war upon us, I should be willing, as matters are now, for the Austrian Government to limit its action to the breaking off of relations.

ZIMMERMANN.

223

Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, February 12, 1917.

Telegram No. 71.

VIENNA, February 11, 1917.

Count Czernin has obtained the consent of the Emperor in case of an American declaration of war upon us, to hand Ambassador Penfield his passports at once and to recall the Austrian Ambassador at Washington.

Whether Count Tarnowsky has delivered his credentials can not be determined here, since the American Government has let no more telegrams come through. Today a short telegram came in from Count Tarnowsky, according to which there is no desire for war in the United States but, on the other hand, the wish to avoid any increase of tension and resulting break with Austria.

Yesterday I suggested to Count Czernin to instruct Count Tarnowsky, if still possible to do so, to refrain from delivering his credentials and eventually to take steps against any attempt to stir the neutral Powers up against us. Minister asked for time to think it over and replied to me today: He hesitated to give the first-named instructions to the Ambassador, since that

might look like a breaking of relations, coming from this side, and might constitute half-way measures which might place Count Tarnowsky in a delicate position, rendered still more difficult by the existing situation—a result which he and, according to the telegrams of Prince Hohenlohe, your Excellency also desires to avoid.

Any attempt to take steps against Wilson's effort to stir up feeling against us would now come too late, in his opinion, since the neutrals, and particularly Sweden, had already presented Wilson with a snub, pure and simple. He believed that it would be looked upon as an indication of self-confidence and strong nerves for the Central Powers not to have made a move in this matter, and to have left the question of responses entirely in the hands of the neutrals, which, as a matter of fact, had resulted most satisfactorily.

WEDEL.

224

Cables of the "New York American"

Rec. Berlin, February 13, 1917.

I

NEW YORK, February 8, 1917.

BAYARD HALE, Berlin:

The sentiment of the American people unitedly supports the President, though many profoundly deplore the necessity for today's action and ardently hope for a restoration of amity. The leaders of Congress of both parties, bankers, even with strong German sympathies, all agree that the President can do no less than protect American lives at any cost. Property losses, however severe, would not justify the rupture of relations. The American press, led by the *Staats-Zeitung*, New York, and the *Staats-Zeitung*, Illinois, will both publish editorials on Sunday supporting the President and hoping that submarines will not wantonly take a single American right, thereby avoiding an open challenge by their dearly beloved Fatherland. The Cincinnati *Volksblatt* is the only German paper in the United States thus failing to support the President, but it says that if war comes, it will be "America first" with every German citizen. The three greatest South American nations, Argentina, Brazil and Chile, according to the press, unanimously support the action of President Wilson, though many condemn the methods of the British blockade. The public here is perfectly calm and there is no hostility shown against Germany. Extra funds will be cabled Monday for wireless.

NEW YORK AMERICAN.

II

NEW YORK, *February 8, 1917.*

BAYARD HALE, Berlin:

Mr. Hearst urges that a big peace statement from His Imperial Majesty or from Bethmann-Hollweg might solve the whole situation. Americans were getting friendly to Germany and the President was working for the peace which Americans and Germans desired. The German note, especially the two interpolated paragraphs, upset everything; still the President and the country hope for peace. The right word spoken by Germany at this time might completely restore good-will.

NEW YORK AMERICAN.

225

Ambassador v. Kühlmann to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, February 14, 1917.

Telegram No. 183.

CONSTANTINOPLE, *February 13, 1917.*

As Talaat Pasha confidentially informed me, Ambassador Elkus has shown him a telegram from Washington in which he was instructed by the State Department to maintain diplomatic relations with Turkey. Elkus is obviously exerting his entire influence to avoid any German-American conflict which would also have to result in a breaking off of relations with Turkey.

KÜHLMANN.

226

Minister Rosen to the Foreign Office

Rec. February 14, 1917.

Telegram No. 86.

Confidential.

THE HAGUE, *February 14, 1917.*

I have been quite confidentially informed that "President Wilson had sent various friends to certain neutral Ministers in Washington, who asked these Ministers if it were not perhaps possible for their governments to suggest some other means whereby an agreement could be reached with regard to a mitigation of the conduct of the submarine warfare.

That it was plain that Wilson was seeking for some escape from his position.

The general opinion is that our official proposal has made this rather more difficult for him than otherwise.

ROSEN.

227

Ambassador Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office

Rec. February 15, 1917.

Telegram No. 245.

WASHINGTON, February 10, 1917.

In view of the fact that since the 1st of February no *contretemps* has arisen of which an American has been the victim, the war feeling has greatly diminished; the country desires no war. In case an accident does occur, Wilson's plan will be primarily only to adopt steps which will protect American ships and to wait and see what we do; we should be able to postpone actual war for quite awhile yet if we do not actually attack the United States of America ourselves. If necessary, negotiations can always be carried on by the Austrian Embassy or by the Swiss Minister; Wilson will in no event enter into an alliance with our enemies.

BERNSTORFF.

228

*Minister v. Romberg to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg*¹

Rec. February 24, 1917.

No. 498.

BERNE, February 21, 1917.

With regard to Mr. Lansing's answer to the communication of the Swiss Legation touching our willingness to take up negotiations with the United States with regard to the blockade on commerce, Ritter reports as follows on the 13th instant to the Bundesrat:

Lansing sends me a very polite note today. He states that he is instructed by Wilson to say that the Government of the United States would be very glad to discuss questions with the German Government, the purpose of which would be to recall the proclamation of the 31st of January by means of which, without any preliminary notice of any kind, it suddenly revoked those assurances which it had given this Government on the 4th of May. The Government of the United States feels that it is not in a position to discuss with the German Government the present U-boat war against neutrals, unless and until the Government of Germany will renew its assurances of the 4th of May and will act in accordance with the same. End of note.

ROMBERG.

¹ 219 and 221, *ante*, pp. 1326, 1327.

Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office

Rec. March 1, 1917.
Telegram No. 102.

VIENNA, March 1, 1917.

From the communications received by Ambassador Penfield, who obviously has received news from Washington to the same effect, and from the telegrams sent by Count Tarnowsky. . . . Count Czernin concludes that President Wilson is in great difficulties.

It appears that he can not recede and that he does not want to go forward, or does not dare to do so, whether it is that that never was his purpose and he has been simply bluffing, or whether it is that the answer of the neutrals and the confusion in the United States have disheartened him, or whether it is because other questions, such as those of Japan and Mexico, etc., make him pause. So much appears to be plain, that the President is depressed and nervous and up to the present time has found no escape from the unfortunate position into which he has brought himself.

WEDEL.

Ambassador Count Wedel to the Foreign Office

Rec. March 2, 1917.
Telegram No. 104.

In connection with telegram No. 102.¹

VIENNA, March 1, 1917.

Ambassador Penfield and Count Tarnowsky agree with each other in communications sent to Count Czernin, to the effect that President Wilson, if it is in any way possible to do so, is desirous of avoiding war with us and of avoiding the breaking off of relations with Austria-Hungary, because if this occurs the situation will become more critical and the risk of war will be increased. Whether or not this is possible depends upon the answer of the Imperial and Royal Government to the last inquiry made by the United States as to whether Austria-Hungary had changed its point of view, and had revoked its earlier promise with regard to the warning of vessels. Both Ambassadors have indicated that two elements may be of significance, first, the establishment of the fact that Austria-Hungary is restricting its U-boat operations to the Mediterranean, since the United States has less interests in that region, secondly, that a flat conflict between the earlier assurances and the present reply be avoided. On this point, Count Czernin makes the following remarks: The Imperial and Royal Government had definitely determined not to yield by a hair's breadth from the methods of the U-boat

¹ 229, *supra*.

war announced on the 31st of January. Proceeding upon the theory that we, too, would consider it desirable to avoid a declaration of war on the part of the United States, or at least to put it off until sometime in the future, he proposed to answer more or less along the following lines, to the effect that Austria-Hungary would hold fast to the promises earlier announced, and that vessels would not be torpedoed without warning. That the warning to be given in every individual case had been substituted by the general warning, consisting of the announcement of a danger zone whose limits were definitely defined; that he was considering how the idea might be inconspicuously introduced that Austria-Hungary would limit its operations in the U-boat war to the Mediterranean. The reply was being drafted along these lines; that as yet the matter had not been decided and was not ripe for discussion; that he asked that it might be considered as strictly confidential.

When I was asked for my personal opinion, I remarked that the announcement with regard to the warning was not different from our conception thereof; that on the other hand, the assertion that Austria would only carry on the U-boat war in the Mediterranean did not seem to me to be unobjectionable, since it established a difference between the methods of Germany and Austria, and would make it possible for Mr. Wilson to use it as a basis of differentiation. Count Czernin answered that he shared my doubts and was searching his mind for some reference to the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, whereby the impression might be created that no particular point was involved therein; that he, for his part, attributed considerable significance to the reference in question, since he believed that it might be of extraordinary importance. He believed that the question of gaining time was of the greatest importance in the present situation, since perhaps in the course of a few weeks the successes of our U-boats might have convinced people broadcast in the United States of the victory of the Central Powers, so that the danger of a declaration of war would be overcome. Ambassador Hohenlohe is requested to take the matter up.

WEDEL.

231

Ambassador Count Wedel to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg

Rec. March 16, 1917.

No. 87.

VIENNA, March 14, 1917.

The favorable reception of the Austrian U-boat notes in Germany, by the neutral countries and now even in the United States, indicates a success on the part of Count Czernin which was all the more joyfully greeted by the public and the press because our allies have not been altogether pampered

by unstinted praise. Even Count Czernin himself hardly expected such results, and has now deserted an extreme of scepticism to become an extreme optimist. In America's attitude he detects the proof that Wilson wishes to avoid war with us, and believes, too, that it can be avoided by clever manipulation. By the term "clever manipulation," he means a "fortuitous" sparing of both those armed American merchant vessels which are supposed to have left.

In answer to this, I argued that the publication of the message to our Minister in Mexico did not speak very strongly for friendly intentions on the part of Wilson, and that the dispatching of armed merchant vessels into the restricted area was the equivalent of a challenge; that the "fortuitous" sparing of these vessels would in all probability mean that the Americans would take up again the transportation of ammunition in full swing, the very thing which the U-boat war was supposed to put a stop to.

Count Tarnowsky has not even yet been received by the President, but they have put up with this here, since connection with the Imperial and Royal Ambassador has been restored, and since no further obstacles have been placed even in the way of using wireless. . . . Two new members of the American Embassy here who have just arrived have left cards at our Embassy and with the members of the Bavarian and Saxon Legation, which were not returned. As a matter of fact, Mr. Penfield had invited the Saxon Minister to breakfast on the day of the breaking off of relations, a circumstance which, however, could be explained by the fact that the Ambassador continues to consider Saxony a neutral State. He has constantly treated the Saxons differently from the Bavarians, Turks, Bulgarians and members of the Imperial Embassy, ever since the beginning of the war.

WEDEL.

Memorandum of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy

Rec. March 16, 1917.

Confidential.

BERLIN, March 14, 1917.

On the 13th instant, the American Ambassador in Vienna expressed the wish to Count Czernin, quite spontaneously, that the next American ships which were *en route* for England might be "overlooked" and not torpedoed. That this would satisfy President Wilson in the light of the public opinion of the United States; that thereafter it was certain that no more ships would proceed; that, as things stood, the United States must determine whether it was to be war or peace; that in case of the former America would not henceforth be able to export appreciable amounts of ammunition; and in

case of the latter—which President Wilson hoped for—complications would be avoided.

Although Count Czernin fully appreciates the weak side of this argument, he has nevertheless instructed the Imperial and Royal Embassy to bring his conversation which he has had with Mr. Penfield to the knowledge of the foreign office, since he has gotten the impression that the American Ambassador, in addressing him, was following instructions.

233

Chief of the Admiralty Staff Admiral v. Holtzendorff to the Emperor

Rec. March 20, 1917.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *March 18, 1917.*

ANNOUNCEMENT

In the memorandum of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy in Berlin,¹ to which my attention was called by Your Majesty, there is set out the "quite spontaneous wish" of the American Ambassador in Vienna, that the next ships directing their course to England be "overlooked" and not torpedoed; that in this way, President Wilson believes that he will be able to satisfy public opinion and that it will thenceforth be "certain" that no more ships will sail.

Much as it would desire to do so, the Navy Department can not accede to this spontaneous wish. If the numerous reports are to be believed, that American merchant steamers, whether armed or not—this makes no difference—are already on their way toward our restricted area, we may look for their coming into contact at any hour with the U-boats which are stationed in the Atlantic, without any assurance or even any likelihood of being able to avoid this by means of orders issued by wireless.

But if American ships have not yet sailed, and if the spontaneous wish has been announced as a feeler with regard to what our course will be if American ships enter the restricted areas, this would mean at once a six-weeks' delay necessary for the issuance of the required U-boat orders. But, moreover, this would mean a possible taking up of negotiations which would make impossible demands upon us, both from the military and political standpoints. To allow American ships to proceed to the ports of the enemy, and at the same time to prevent with all means at our command the shipping traffic of the small neutral States to do the same, would have a very damaging effect from every point of view; in fact, probably the opposite of the effect which President Wilson presumably desires in connection with his wish to promote

¹ 232, *ante*, p. 1334.

peace. But, leaving this circumstance to one side, it would mean that we would operate in direct opposition to the end and aim of the U-boat war if we were to make exceptions by allowing American imports the special privilege of passing through our commerce blockade at the present critical period.

Your Majesty's diplomatists will know how to deal with the formal request which consists of the attempt to conduct further negotiations under the guise of a certain incognito and by devious paths, after diplomatic relations have been broken off.

But I consider it my duty to point out the flippant and rascally game which is being played with the destinies of great States and peoples, which is revealed by President Wilson's course of action. He wants the question of war and peace to depend upon our winking at the passing through of a few American steamers which were sent into the war zone; in other words, that *we* are to avoid the danger which *he* is obviously, and in the sight of all the world conspiring to bring about. In fact, the danger of war lies in the utter lack of conscience of a national government which operates with farcical means, and, according to my judgment and feeling, we should most positively avoid even the mere semblance of allowing German politics or warfare to be ridden by the American desire, which would lead our national policy into a U-boat trap, or have America retreat from her stand by means of Germany's humiliation. For this reason, it seems to me to be of the utmost importance that neither the German people nor the neutral Powers be longer left in the dark with regard to President Wilson's attitude touching the question of war with Germany, and not to allow ourselves to be put in a wrong position in the eyes of the world by added procrastination and fumbling around with questions of negotiation. Our entire press should be well informed on this point, and should express this thought firmly and clearly—if possible, before the first encounter in the restricted area.

V. HOLTZENDORFF,
*Admiral, Chief of the Admiralty
Staff of the Navy.*

Marginal note by The Emperor:

Agreed, reject. To the Foreign Office, March 18, 1917.

W(ILHELM).

Now, once and for all, an *end* to negotiations with America. If Wilson wants war, let him make it, and let him then have it. . . .

234

Minister Count Brockdorff Rantzau to the Foreign Office

Rec. Berlin, April 3, 1917.

Telegram No. 532.

COPENHAGEN, April 3, 1917.

Reuter press telegram which has just come in here announces from Washington that the United States considers itself in a state of war with Germany.

RANTZAU.

2. THE PROPOSAL OF AN ALLIANCE WITH MEXICO

235

*Secretary of State Zimmermann to Ambassador Count Bernstorff*¹

Telegram No. 158.

Strictly confidential.

For your Excellency's exclusively personal information and transmission to the Imperial Minister at Mexico by safe hands:

Telegram No. 1.

Absolutely confidential.

To be personally deciphered.

It is our purpose on the 1st of February to commence the unrestricted U-boat war. The attempt will be made to keep America neutral in spite of it all.

In case we should not be successful in this, we propose Mexico an alliance upon the following terms: Joint conduct of war. Joint conclusion of peace. Ample financial support and an agreement on our part that Mexico shall gain back by conquest the territory lost by her at a prior period in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Arrangement as to details is entrusted to your Excellency.

Your Excellency will make the above known to the President in strict confidence at the moment that war breaks out with the United States, and you will add the suggestion that Japan be requested to take part at once and that he simultaneously mediate between ourselves and Japan.

Please inform the President that the unrestricted use of our U-boats now offers the prospect of forcing England to sue for peace in the course of a few months.

Confirm receipt.

ZIMMERMANN.

¹ Instructions to Minister v. Eckhardt were to be taken by letter by way of Washington to Mexico by U-boat on the 15th of January; since the U-boat *Deutschland* did not start on her outward trip, these instructions were attached on January 16 to telegram No. 157 (57, Supplements, pt. 1, p. 1017) and through the offices of the American Embassy in Berlin telegraphed to Count Bernstorff by way of the State Department in Washington.

Secretary of State Zimmermann to Minister Eckhardt

Telegram No. 11.

In connection with telegram No. 1.¹

Strictly confidential.

To be personally deciphered.

BERLIN, February 5, 1917.

Provided that there is no risk of the secret being betrayed to the United States, will your Excellency take up the alliance question even now with the President. At the same time, the definite conclusion of the alliance depends upon the outbreak of the war between Germany and the United States. The President might even now throw out feelers to Japan.

If the President were to reject our proposal through fear of later American vengeance, you are empowered to offer a defensive alliance after peace is concluded, provided that Mexico succeeds in including Japan in the alliance. Wire confirmation of receipt.

ZIMMERMANN.

¹ 235, *ante*, p. 1337.

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